

not as a point of the historical past, but as a religious affirmation conveying meaning for the present and the future. Aulén himself avows that "Justification is simply the atonement brought into the present."¹¹⁶

Carlson's examination proposes several issues that bear directly upon Aulén's Luther interpretation. He respects Luther's originality; nevertheless, Carlson feels justified in linking Luther to the classic idea of the early Church "inasmuch as the motif of conflict and victory dominates in his original contribution."¹¹⁷ Likewise, he admits that "Luther made use of other motifs than the classic one"; this assertion finds ready acknowledgment by Aulén.¹¹⁸ Carlson also indicates that Swedish Luther research recognizes Luther's employment of such terms as satisfaction, sacrifice, and merit, but that he gives to them "a completely theocentric content" in depicting "the vicarious character of the victory which Christ achieved for men."¹¹⁹

This author explains two other pertinent observations which fit Aulén's soteriological exposition. First, he remarks that "all the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith tend to merge into one. Incarnation, atonement, resurrection, justification - all tend to be variant expressions of the same fundamental motif."¹²⁰ Second, he describes the "superhistorical" character of religious events stating that "each represents an ongoing, timeless event, at the same time that it gets its qualitative

definition from a particular historical event...the event belongs to history, yet it transcends history."¹²¹

Carlson's presentation of these definitive points of Swedish Luther research manifests his basic agreement with Gustaf Aulén's dramatic view of atonement. He also illustrates the impact that Aulén's ideas have had on the entire sphere of Swedish theology.

While Philip Watson and E.M. Carlson represent a side generally favorable to Aulén's interpretation of Luther, Paul Althaus suitably demonstrates a different evaluation. In his work, The Theology of Martin Luther, Althaus offers a direct critique of Aulén;¹²² on the other hand, in his own discussion of Luther's soteriology, many of the notions identified by Aulén appear.

Althaus insists on Luther's strong view of the devil; he states that "Luther takes the devil much more seriously than the Middle Ages did."¹²³ For Luther, the devil is a real and terrible power and the great opponent of God and of Christ.¹²⁴ Althaus seems to echo Aulén's dramatic presentation when he affirms that Luther's theology brought with it "a new and deeper insight into both the nature of the power opposed to God and the sharpness and depth of the universal battle between God and the rebel powers."¹²⁵ The author specifically delineates Luther's statements on this matter.¹²⁶ He also reflects that Luther envisions God and the devil as opposing one another in a struggle for humanity

and for the lordship;¹²⁷ yet according to Luke 11:21f., the stronger power will prevail.¹²⁸

Althaus recognizes Luther's dualism, which Aulén considers essential to the classic view of atonement; he claims likewise that Satan is one of the instruments used by God, in addition to the law, and that God uses the devil as "the tool of his wrath."¹²⁹ In spite of this, God cannot be overcome since, as Althaus reflects, "Luther holds dualism within the boundaries set by God's omnipotence, which works all in all."¹³⁰ Althaus capsulizes his thinking by indicating that Luther's view which "can regard Satan both as the instrument and as the enemy of God" is linked to Luther's concept of the "alien" and "proper" work of God ("opus alienum" - "opus proprium").¹³¹

Here he turns to God's wrath, another Luther concept related to Aulén's theological position.¹³² Two important considerations are stressed by Althaus. First, God's wrath is a reality not apart from but "co-extensive with God's majesty."¹³³ And second, in Christ this wrath or God's "opus alienum" is transformed into God's proper work of love: "Where Christ is, that is, where there is faith in Christ, the wrath of God is no longer present and God's alien work is recognized as God's proper work of love."¹³⁴ Analyzing these concepts, Althaus acknowledges the "dualism" of Luther's theology and thus lends support to much of what Gustaf Aulén proposes.

In dealing with the person of Jesus, the author presents certain thoughts of Luther that are relevant for Aulén's theology.¹³⁵ He examines the "genus majestaticum" (the doctrine that Jesus, according to his human nature, possessed all divine power and attributes at his birth) and the "genus tapeinoticon" (the doctrine that God in Christ shared the weakness, suffering and humiliation of Jesus).¹³⁶ Althaus insists: "Luther did not teach 'patripassionism' (that God suffered). He [Luther] always regarded God's suffering as an incomprehensible mystery."¹³⁷ For Luther, Jesus the man who suffers the wrath of God in all its fury and who must contend with sin, death, and the devil embodies the deepest mystery of God revealed in paradox; and Althaus declares: "The mystery of Christ cannot be expressed without these paradoxes. This is especially true of Christ's sufferings on the cross."¹³⁸ To this explanation, he adds a significant point: Luther's dogmatic theory which describes Christ as true God and true man "is not unified within itself but displays contradictions."¹³⁹

How specifically does Althaus consider Luther's redemption concepts and in what sense do they differ from Aulén's proposition? Althaus' exposition centers around three major thematic features: a satisfaction concept; a conflict notion; an idea of the struggle as an ever-present, contemporaneous reality.

In regard to the first, Althaus claims that "Luther, like Anselm, views Christ's work in terms of

satisfaction."¹⁴⁰ He then amplifies this statement in speaking of a substitution, "a wonderful exchange" by which Christ takes upon himself all men's debts and guilt before God.¹⁴¹ The motivation and source for man's salvation lies in God's love and mercy for sinners.¹⁴² Althaus distinguishes what he considers a key point in Luther's soteriology: "For Anselm, there were only two possibilities, either punishment or satisfaction. For Luther, satisfaction takes place through punishment, not of the sinner but of Christ."¹⁴³ He clearly understands Luther's redemptive concept as "satisfaction through substitutionary punishment." Aulén does not read Luther in this manner; the thought of the punishment of the innocent Christ, especially stated in these uncritical terms, is not acceptable for Aulén's classic view of atonement. Along these same lines, Althaus acknowledges that Luther himself "felt that the term 'satisfaction' was not adequate to express the full significance of Christ's work and of his saving power to redeem us from death and the devil, and to establish the eternal kingdom of his grace."¹⁴⁴

A second notable theme for Althaus concerns Christ's battle against the demonic forces opposing man. Althaus indicates that the main source for Luther's idea is to be found in the Large Commentary on Galatians.¹⁴⁵ Once more his treatment seems to support Aulén's stance especially in such statements as: "...he [Luther] describes it [the work of Christ] also as Christ's battle against the demonic

powers which God's wrath uses in its service and to which God has surrendered humanity."¹⁴⁶ Not only is the sense of dual functioning apparent in this last statement, but also Althaus' opinion, that for Luther "the powers with which Christ must do battle are ultimately to be understood theocentrically,"¹⁴⁷ tends to vindicate Aulén's posture vis-à-vis Luther. Other features mentioned by Althaus likewise lie in Aulén's direction: Luther's insistence that redemption is the work not of any creature but of the divine power solely; and the indispensable unity which Luther predicates of Christ's death and resurrection.¹⁴⁸

A third theme this writer underlines is Luther's belief concerning the contemporaneous aspect of Christ's work as a victory of the Christian's faith.¹⁴⁹ He relates this to the triumph of Christ:

In his person Christ has won the victory over the demonic powers. But his victory is of benefit to me only when Christ lives and rules in me; and this occurs in faith. Thus the assertion that our faith is the victory which overcomes the world (I John 5:4) remains inseparably joined to the assertion that Christ has personally triumphed over the demonic powers.¹⁵⁰

Not only does Althaus recognize Luther's emphasis on the victory aspect of Christ's work but also on the ever-present necessity of faith wherein the "wonderful exchange," by which Christ bears our punishment, can take place.¹⁵¹ He includes the pertinent fact that this faith is an objective part of reconciliation itself.¹⁵² Drawing this contemporary picture, Althaus stresses a double quality in Luther's

redemption presentation - the victory is won and yet the conflict continues:

The Christ who fought then still fights today. He who once arose from the dead constantly and increasingly rises from the dead in his Christians. Luther's Christ is both the historical and the risen and living Christ....His work transcends the distinction between what has happened and what is happening, between history outside of us and before us and history within us, and thus also between past history and the Spirit who today works and creates faith. ¹⁵³ All belongs to the theology of the work of Christ.

Althaus' survey of these three interpretative themes in Luther's soteriology appears to disclose that he agrees with much of Aulén's evaluation of Luther. Still, Althaus raises serious critical questions about Aulén's use of Luther in the dramatic atonement exposition.

Examining Luther's theology, Althaus specifically mentions that his own thinking implicitly rejects "a modern interpretation which puts Luther's accent at a different point"; this "modern interpretation," by which he means Aulén's presentation, states that "the decisive factor in Christ's work is not its relationship to God's righteousness and wrath but to the demonic powers which threaten men."¹⁵⁴ Althaus clarifies his statement by arguing that at this point Aulén's interpretation of Luther is not substantiated by the sources.¹⁵⁵ Althaus sees the opposing forces as having their "authority...only through God's wrath."¹⁵⁶ He goes on to affirm that God's wrath demands a satisfaction, and that this is Luther's primary emphasis: "The satisfaction which God's righteousness demands constitutes

the primary and decisive significance of Christ's work and particularly of his death. Everything else depends on this satisfaction, including the destruction of the might and authority of the demonic powers."¹⁵⁷ He further insists that "it is simply not permissible to declare that the concept of Christ's battle and victory over the evil powers is decisive for Luther, but that the concepts of satisfaction and stilling the wrath of God do not express his own position and instead reflect the form of the question put to him by his opponents."¹⁵⁸

Pursuing this same line of thought, the author underlines his principal objection: "It is therefore a significant misrepresentation of Luther to classify him one-sidedly as a representative of the 'classical type' as the Lundensians do. On the contrary, Luther combines the classical and the Latin concepts - to use Aulén's term - but in such a way that he decisively follows the Latin line."¹⁵⁹ Althaus joins to his assertion a modification about the nature of satisfaction as found in Luther: "At the same time, Luther stands closer to the Greeks [the theology of the early Church] than to Anselm insofar as he is not so much concerned with turning away the wrath which is to come, as with suffering and overcoming the wrath of God which is present."¹⁶⁰

In evaluating Luther regarding Anselm's satisfaction, Althaus bypasses the ideas of merit and transference of merit which are determinative characteristics of the Latin

type of atonement. Later in this same book on Luther's theology, when discussing the Church, Althaus observes that Luther's view excludes such notions of "meritorious intercession" or transference of merits.¹⁶¹ Here he predicates a clear difference between Anselm and Luther.¹⁶²

This theologian's critique of Aulén's presentation vis-à-vis Luther's soteriology betrays its own weak points. Althaus proposes that in some sense God's wrath must be satisfied as the primary condition upon which the subsequent defeat of the forces opposed to mankind rests. In this way, he fails to maintain an integral view of wrath and the opposing evil forces. For Aulén in his reading of Luther's soteriology, the wrath is the very displeasure of God's inner life which necessitates the conflict and subsequent victory. Aulén's theology supposes an integrality which appears lacking in Althaus' consideration.

Althaus similarly misses a vital quality of Aulén's dramatic atonement idea: salvation is from God, through and through. While Aulén himself admits a mixture of Latin terms and ideas in Luther's vibrant thinking, nevertheless, the main feature remains Luther's opposition to any anthropocentric, rationalistic structure of salvation. In the specific section of his book where Althaus discusses Aulén's proposals, the author neglects this significant factor. However, elsewhere in his exposition, Althaus acknowledges the importance of a soteriological theocentricity at the heart of Luther's reform, a

theocentricity which "completely frees a man from the delusion that he could contribute something to his own salvation."¹⁶³ It is this thoroughgoing theocentricity so central to Luther which emboldens Aulén's assertions. If Althaus' statement concerning Luther's soteriological attitude is correct as stated - "...he [Luther] decisively follows the Latin line..." - then a certain critical inconsistency emerges here from Luther's theology. If, on the other hand, one can admit that Luther mixes motifs and themes, yet consistently returns to a notion of divine victory, then the theocentricity of the Reformer's thinking appears not to be compromised.

Althaus likewise favors a notion concerning reconciliation between God and man as taking place in a satisfaction scheme apart from struggle with the forces of evil. He understands satisfaction in the constricted sense of Anselm's rationalistic structure, indicating that "for Luther, justification is based on reconciliation through Christ's satisfaction."¹⁶⁴ This narrowed sense of satisfaction implies the existence of an impersonal order of divine justice to which all are subject and which must be properly rectified before reconciliation is attained. Aulén's insistence on the divine wrath, as not apart from the personal divine being and as transcended and overcome by the dramatic victory of divine loving in Christ, maintains an integrality of God's work absent in the Latin type. For the dramatic atonement view, no antecedent satisfaction is

necessary; in the divine victory, reconciliation, atonement and satisfaction are achieved all at once. To the extent that Althaus' reading of Luther is so vigorously tied to the Anselmian structure, the theocentricity of Luther's theology is jeopardized. Although Aulén's unique presentation may overstress the case, his own evaluation of Luther appears more consistent with the Reformer's intentions and perspectives.

While Althaus' critique of Aulén leaves room for admitting a variety of redemption motifs in Luther, other critical assessments link Luther so closely to Anselm's posture as to rule out any validity for a dramatic atonement view in Luther's thinking.

One finds this kind of consideration in J. Theodore Mueller.¹⁶⁵ Accusing Aulén of a "narrow appraisal of Luther," Mueller himself makes the rather apodictic statement: "The Wittenberg Reformer must assuredly speak of Christ's atoning work in terms of the Latin, or Anselmic, type; and he uses these terms in exactly the same sense as did the erudite scholar of Canterbury."¹⁶⁶ Mueller misses an apparent inconsistency when he pointedly criticizes Aulén for attempting to do what Luther never did, namely, "elaborate a scientific statement of the doctrine of the atonement with nice distinctions and subtle analyses."¹⁶⁷ Had Mueller been more precise, he would not have spoken so stringently of Luther's utilization of the Latin type of atonement structure, nor would he have failed to see a

similar generic approach to Christ's salvific work both in Luther and in Aulén's use of Luther's expressions. He asserts that Luther took the Anselmian doctrine "to fill it with a truly evangelical content."¹⁶⁸ Aulén vigorously rejects this whole stream of thinking, since he claims that one of the chief defects of Anselm's structure is its dominant anthropocentric emphasis in contrast to Luther's theocentricity.

Mueller's analysis of Luther indicates that satisfaction is a prerequisite for divine mercy and that this needs to be achieved in a sense of compensation.¹⁶⁹ This type of Luther interpretation insists also that Luther went beyond Anselm in teaching that Christ's fulfillment of the divine law was vicarious or substitutionary since Luther often employed the expression that Christ put himself under the law for us (Gal. 4:4-5).¹⁷⁰ Aulén recognizes the major elements of Lutheran Orthodoxy as affirming these same points.¹⁷¹

Finalizing his negative judgment of Aulén, this author concludes that "essentially, therefore, there is no difference between Luther and Anselm in their teaching of Christ's atoning work."¹⁷² He describes this in detail:

Both use the same terms emphasizing the propitiatory and objective character of the atonement. Practically, the only real difference between Luther and Anselm is that the Wittenberg Reformer stressed also the active obedience of Christ, or his vicarious fulfillment of the divine law, whereas Anselm centered his atoning work in his death on the cross. In this also Luther often centers his doctrine of the atonement, for the vicarious propitiatory death of the Lord was the

culmination of his willing obedience to his Father's will.¹⁷³

Mueller's critique underlines the satisfaction concept and Christ's atoning obedience and death. In doing so, his Luther interpretation differs markedly from Aulén's; at the same time, it fails to do justice to Luther's theological reform as it pertains to soteriology. This writer typifies that critique of Aulén which admits no deviation from the satisfaction structure of Anselm in Luther's thought and which lacks carefully nuanced criticisms such as those of Althaus.

The important question of the relationship between Anselm and Luther, and Aulén's evaluation of it, is the subject of an article by Ted Peters, "The Atonement in Anselm and Luther, Second Thoughts About Gustaf Aulén's Christus Victor."¹⁷⁴ This article pinpoints more accurately the agreement and divergence in these respective positions.

First, Peters states a basic idea: "Anselm's satisfaction theory was not in itself anything repugnant to Luther and...Luther himself saw fit to use it."¹⁷⁵ Also, he observes that "Aulén's evaluation seems unfair, for God is no less responsible for the atonement in this view [Anselm's] than he is in the classic theory."¹⁷⁶

Summarizing the principal features of Anselm's exposition, Peters strongly endorses the originality of Anselm's use of the satisfaction concept.¹⁷⁷ While he admits the necessary relationship of this theory to the penitential system of the early and medieval Church, nevertheless, he sees Anselm's

originality linked to a deeper insight regarding God and the order of the universe.¹⁷⁸ Peters likewise suggests that Aulén has misjudged the depth behind Anselm's view of God and the universe.¹⁷⁹ He claims that Anselm demonstrates that "behind the apparent contradictoriness of the notions of mercy and justice, there lies a single unitary law."¹⁸⁰ The author criticizes Aulén's interpretation in emphatic terms: "God for Anselm is no less merciful, no less gracious, than is God for Luther or for Aulén."¹⁸¹ Peters intensifies his dissent by questioning whether Aulén's argument appreciates "Anselm's break from the penal substitution notion in the Latin practice of penance"¹⁸² - an assertion which Peters does not fully prove.

In discussing Luther's specific contribution, Peters concedes "a satisfaction perspective" in the Reformer's soteriology with "certain vital elements in common with Anselm."¹⁸³ He disputes Aulén's appraisal: "Aulén has been insensitive to the breadth and complex texture of Luther's many-sided theology. The Christus Victor notion is certainly present in Luther's thought, it may even be the predominant view. However, it does not preclude the presence of other approaches."¹⁸⁴

Peters' article underlines a noteworthy principle in Luther's redemption theology marking a departure from Anselm: "For Anselm, satisfaction is not punishment for sin, rather it is a substitute for punishment - aut poena aut satisfactio. For Luther satisfaction includes the

notion of penal substitution. Christ suffers our punishment."¹⁸⁵ This is a problematic point for Aulén's Luther interpretation.

Peters disagrees with Aulén's attempt to criticize Anselm's legalism and then to contrast him with Luther.¹⁸⁶ He compares Aulén's position to that of Albrecht Ritschl, wherein there is an "unresolvable conflict between love and justice, so that God can be defined only as a loving Father and not as a Judge."¹⁸⁷ Although Aulén's own exposition has the capacity to meet such criticism, Peters correctly affirms that Aulén's presentation is open to challenge on this point of the relationship between justice and love.

Constructing the center of his argument with Aulén, Peters joins together the following basic ideas on Anselm and Luther: a) "Aulén's point was based on the supposition that Anselm was a mere product of the Latin penitential system in which men purchased forgiveness by supererogatory works...Anselm sets himself apart from that penitential practice by attaching the ability to make satisfaction only to the God-man"; b) "Aulén tried to force Anselm into an unacceptable mold. When Anselm said that no one but a man "ought" to make satisfaction (CDH, II, 6), Aulén concluded he meant a man "could" make the satisfaction and that that was what Christ did, qua homo"; c) "...on this point Luther and Anselm stand together; no man (qua homo) is capable of achieving his own salvation and it is this fact which turns his vision toward the Incarnate Son of God who accomplishes

the atoning work in man's behalf."¹⁸⁸ The Anselmian concept of the "God-man" provides the basis for Peters' association of Anselm with Luther in this context. While Peters presents a formidable critique of Aulén's soteriological proposal, he also declares that "there is no intrinsic reason why either the Christus Victor motif or the satisfaction motif should exclude the other."¹⁸⁹

Questioning "why should the classical theory exclude the Latin theory," the writer objects to Aulén's attempt to take one motif in Luther's theology and superimpose it upon all the rest of Luther's thought.¹⁹⁰ Insisting that Luther is not in the final analysis "Anselmian," Peters, nonetheless, sees the major coherence of these two figures in basic continuity over a soteriology in which "God is seen by both to be the agent and the object of the atoning work."¹⁹¹ In this sense, Peters rejects Aulén's claim concerning Luther's separation from Anselm's thinking.

Re-examining the chief issues of criticism directed at Gustaf Aulén's exposition of a dramatic atonement idea in the published Christus Victor, as well as throughout his entire soteriological work, one becomes aware of certain corrective shifts of emphasis. Aulén's later publications such as The Drama and the Symbols and Jesus in Contemporary Historical Research manifest a deeper appreciation for Christ's humanity in the salvation question. Likewise, he himself shows a sympathetic regard for the endeavor of Anselm notwithstanding its subsequent historical

application; however, he does continue to fault the rationalistic structure of such an atonement presentation.¹⁹² Similarly, an increasing value for the historical dimension of Christ's salvific work is evidenced.¹⁹³ On the other hand, in the matter of how Aulén understands and presents Luther's soteriology, there is no noticeable departure from the firm posture he espouses in the Olaus Petri lectures. This remains his stance on Luther in the ensuing decades.

Beyond the particular criticisms of Aulén made by commentators such as Althaus, Mueller, and Peters, one might inquire as to what forms the basis for Aulén's decisive affirmation regarding Luther's theology. While he treats of Luther in a variety of works, Aulén's article, "The History of Doctrine in the Light of Luther Research" (1932), discloses certain revealing ideas.¹⁹⁴

In this work, Aulén argues that Luther's theology not only opposed the moralism of medieval Christianity but that "his anti-moralism was bound up with an anti-idealism which completely destroyed the medieval synthesis."¹⁹⁵ By this Aulén signifies Luther's radical opposition to a doctrine of salvation based upon man instead of recognizing man's sinfulness and total dependence upon God:

Justificatio sola fide consisted in God's reconciling love admitting man, who was completely unworthy, into fellowship through the forgiveness of sins. Man possessed no merit, no worth which could in any way account for¹⁹⁶ or motivate the divine act of forgiveness.

Aulén claims that Luther resists any notion of justification as the result of the growth of caritas toward God and the suppression of sin; Luther, he proposes, "pointed solely to God's act of love, which stepped out of the hidden and worked sub contraria specie (contrary to appearance)." ¹⁹⁷

Luther's theologia crucis, according to Aulén, must be understood in this sense: "The cross was a crux triumphans, the place where God's love, seemingly hidden, sub specie contraria, carried out its victorious act." ¹⁹⁸ Aulén

contends that Luther judges this basic religious truth to be distorted by medieval theology; and Luther's reform addresses this situation: "Luther's greatness does not lie in having brought forward a new variant of Christianity, but in having distinguished the uniqueness of Christianity more clearly than anyone before him." ¹⁹⁹

Given Aulén's statement, one easily discerns why Aulén so definitively separates the atonement positions of Anselm and Luther. The Latin type of atonement runs too close to the moralistic bent of the medieval scheme of salvation. In Christus Victor Aulén clearly focuses his thinking on this assertion:

This Latin doctrine involved the idea of law and justice as the typical expression of God's relation to man; but this is just what Luther tears in pieces....The structure of the Latin theory is rational throughout; Luther, if he is sure of anything, is sure that God's work in Christ of atonement, forgiveness, justification, bears the signature contra rationem et legem. ²⁰⁰

Following this trend of thought, Aulén would say that his critics fail to realize the depth of Luther's thinking

in returning beyond Anselm and the satisfaction concept to the central atonement view of the early Church, that of victory. Aulén is convinced that Luther's own expressions substantiate this idea of atonement.

E. Critical Points of Luther's Soteriology

In his study of Luther's soteriology, Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ, Marc Lienhard focuses attention on several crucial areas in Luther's thinking which bear direct relevance for Aulén's Christus Victor proposal.²⁰¹ Lienhard traces Luther's development by concentrating chronologically on Luther's activity and theological productions. By following this pattern, Lienhard exposes the significant emphases in Luther's thought; much of how he interprets Luther relates to Gustaf Aulén's presentation of the dramatic atonement idea.

Discussing Luther's concepts, Lienhard suggests that Luther's view of the relationship between the cross and the resurrection indicates the Reformer's fidelity to the early Church: "...a fundamental simul unites the cross and the resurrection. The cross is never given preeminence over the resurrection. When Christ suffered and died, the resurrection and victory had already been given."²⁰² Likewise, Lienhard claims that for Luther a parallel religious unity exists between the death-resurrection and Christ's Incarnation:

we have seen first of all that the Incarnation, the cross, and the resurrection are dealt with equally. The cross is not preferred to the Incarnation or the resurrection, as is too often alleged about the Reformer.²⁰³

In this same vein, Lienhard accentuates the crucial importance of such unity in Luther's thinking concerning Christ's victory over the forces of bondage:

But even when his attention is concentrated on the cross and on the "theology of the cross," Luther does not lose sight of the resurrection. The Incarnation and the cross call up the resurrection, which reveals their meaning. On the other hand, the Reformer stressed the joyful theme of the victory of Christ over the powers. In this perspective, inherited from the early Church, the resurrection as victory over death holds a place of first importance.²⁰⁴

Aulén's treatment of Luther in the published Christus Victor expresses this very same unity of atonement and the Incarnation.²⁰⁵ And of course, Aulén delights in Luther's attempt to recapture "the note of triumph which rang through the early Church," since "we have only to listen to Luther's hymns to feel how they thrill with triumph, like a fanfare of trumpets."²⁰⁶ In The Drama and the Symbols Aulén explicitly affirms the integral harmony of cross and resurrection: "...they belong together, not just that one is added to the other on some sort of a-plus-b formula. They are one inseparable unit."²⁰⁷ Speaking of Luther's use of "the traditional scholastic language," Aulén remarks that "the primitive Christian perspective of the early Church comes out in him."²⁰⁸

Advancing this consideration in The Drama and the Symbols, Aulén faults scholasticism and medieval passion

mysticism for their failure to maintain this integral religious unity. For him, this error weighs directly upon the inability of the Latin type of atonement to evaluate properly the work of Christ.²⁰⁹ In medieval scholasticism, and by this Aulén includes the Latin atonement theory, he states that "the New Testament balance was gradually lost, and the whole emphasis was laid on suffering and the cross, while the resurrection was squeezed out...in scholasticism it [the resurrection] no longer plays a real part.

Everything now depends on the 'satisfaction' that Christ brings to God through his sacrifice."²¹⁰ Importantly Aulén alleges that this dichotomy "gives the scholastic doctrine of atonement its characteristic structure,"²¹¹ and it is precisely this structure that Aulén finds unacceptable, indicating that "the crux of the matter is that in the very theological structure there was a tendency to rational explanation, a rationalization, which had fatal results for the image of God...."²¹² He connects this situation with the rise of medieval passion mysticism and contends that "the Reformation is a reaction against passion mysticism."²¹³ In like fashion, Lienhard's Luther interpretation stresses this integral unity of cross and resurrection in that "the resurrection also manifests the reality of our reconciliation with God and thus holds a fundamental place in the thought of Luther."²¹⁴

Both Lienhard and Aulén argue that Lutheran Orthodoxy likewise failed to maintain this essential unity by

reverting to the dominant view of the Latin atonement type. Lienhard expresses the unfortunate result of this reversion: "In what concerns the saving work of Christ, one can detect in Lutheran Orthodoxy, a deliberate return to the system of St. Anselm. In contrast to Luther, the affinities with the early Church fade, particularly in relation to the importance of the resurrection."²¹⁵ Aulén upholds the same assertion throughout Christus Victor.²¹⁶ Similarly, in The Drama and the Symbols Aulén discusses this reversal of Luther's insights.²¹⁷ All through his soteriological presentation, Aulén's judgment of this development in Lutheran post-Reformation theology is unreservedly negative.

Benkt-Erik Benktson reiterates Aulén's emphatic affirmation of the definitive unity between the cross and the resurrection victory:

Für Aulén liegt das Dramatische in der Zusammenschau von Kreuz und Auferstehung. Die Einheit von Kreuz und Auferstehung ist der Höhepunkt des Christus-Dramas. Beide gehören im Neuen Testament unlöslich zusammen, nicht nur so, dass man sie nach der Formel $a + b$ addieren könnte, sondern sie stellen in Wirklichkeit eine unteilbare Einheit dar.²¹⁸

For Aulén's theological exposition, the "eine unteilbare Einheit," of which Benktson speaks, reflects Aulén's interpretation of Luther's ideas.

Regarding the question of cross and resurrection, Lienhard identifies a parallel coherence in Luther's thought between creation and redemption. Lienhard declares that "it is the creative Word who is crucified and who suffers in union with the man Jesus. There is no rift between the

creative work and the work of redemption...."²¹⁹ He understands Luther's notion of the "communication of attributes" as conducive to this affirmation.²²⁰ Aulén reiterates the same point from a soteriological perspective and insists that "the God of creation and the God of salvation are one and the same."²²¹ Aulén, however, carefully avoids any modalistic tendency:

...the meaning and purpose of salvation cannot be understood unless they are seen from the perspective of creation, and...the meaning and purpose of creation can similarly not be understood unless they are seen from the perspective of salvation. The origin, meaning, and purpose of creation are revealed in the work of salvation²²² that God effects in and through Christ.

While Aulén proposes no syllogistic deduction of such observations from Luther, the entire atmosphere of Aulén's soteriology resounds with Luther's ideas on creation, grace, and salvation. Among them, the integral unity of cross-resurrection and creation-redemption permeates Aulén's classic view of atonement.

Expanding his analysis, Marc Lienhard repeatedly describes the "dramatic" aspect of Christ's work. Here the connection with Aulén's presentation appears obvious. In reading Luther, Lienhard portrays Luther's soteriology as best understood "within the framework of a drama which takes place between the Father and the Son...."²²³ From Luther's viewpoint then, this dramatic salvation is not accomplished apart from the free obedience of the Son who confronts the evil forces opposed to God. Lienhard suggests "a drama

passing through this earth, through the Incarnation of the son, through his free obedience as a human being, through his sacrifice freely accepted, and through his act of suffering."²²⁴

In this dramatic turn of events, Lienhard claims that Luther does not envision Christ as a passive object but rather as actively giving himself, and thus not only revealing God's love, but also by this active, personal sacrifice destroying the obstacles to salvation. Lienhard's affirmation is based upon his interpretation of Luther's (1535) Commentary on Galatians;²²⁵ he declares:

But Christ was not a passive victim, an object tossed about by the wrath of God. He not only offered himself in sacrifice, but "he made himself sin, our victim."²²⁶

But Christ is not only a passive object thrown in some way by God into the world and punished by the Father....He goes to sinners in free obedience to the Father. Thus Luther emphasizes both the love of the Father who is the author of our salvation and the love which moved the Son, who wished to be the companion²²⁷ of sinners, who takes on himself all our sins.

Luther even imagines a kind of declaration by the Father to the Son: "Be thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men; see therefore that thou pay and satisfy for them."²²⁸

Aulén's soteriological exposition upholds this same active role for both the Father and the Son. In this unity, the drama of Christ's self-giving and the love of the Father reach a decisive stage. This carries importance for Aulén's God-picture as well as for his interpretation of atonement. In The Drama and the Symbols Aulén appreciates the depth of

the unity of the Father and the Son expressed in the drama of redemption:

God's relation to the Christ drama does not merely consist of, is not limited to, his having "sent" Christ to the world with a special task to perform, and, when that task was performed, having "exalted" him. This kind of limitation of God's relation to the Christ drama, by which God would, as it were, have stood back waiting while Christ carried out his work on earth, does not correspond to the picture drawn in the New Testament.... Instead, he is actively engaged in what is going on.²²⁹

Aulén also relates this active role of Christ and the Father to the notion of struggle and suffering: "That makes it clear that it was not only a passive, enduring suffering, but an active, purposeful suffering. Suffering is part of, is a form of, the battle of God's love against all that is anti-God and destructive."²³⁰ For Aulén, Jesus' active role in redemption can be termed "God's own battle," "the way of sacrifice of God's own love."²³¹

Commenting on Dag Hammarskjöld's thoughts in Markings concerning the sacrifice of Jesus, Aulén highlights the active role of Jesus in self-giving "as an action of divine love."²³² This same concept regarding God's action in the salvific drama finds expression in Benktson's comments on Aulén's atonement presentation as giving full value to the uniqueness of God's redeeming love: "Die Opfertat der Liebe Christi ist Gottes eigene Versöhnungstat. Und darum ist Christi Blut nicht so sehr Gabe an Gott, sondern Gabe Gottes."²³³

Describing this active, direct participation of both the Father and the Son,²³⁴ Lienhard endorses two affirmations of Luther which bear directly upon Aulén's classical atonement discussion:

...the attitude of Jesus Christ before God is an active one. He does not passively suffer the abandonment by the Father, but continues to love him, to offer himself to him. And it is thus that the anger of God is disarmed, not simply by the juridical effect of a punishment or by a satisfactory work accomplished in perfect fashion, but because the love of the Son for the Father, a reflection of the love of the Father for the Son and for all human beings remained active even in the night of anger.²³⁵

By picturing God's love as remaining "active even in the night of anger" and God's anger as being "disarmed" by this love, Lienhard's appraisal of Luther's view concurs with that of Aulén. In Christus Victor Aulén demonstrates the dualistic outlook inherent in such a presentation and speaks of God's wrath as "transcended" ("aufgehoben"). Aulén's words agree with Lienhard's Luther evaluation. Likewise, Aulén recognizes the superiority of Luther's thinking over that of the Latin concept of satisfaction:

For the Latin theory, the satisfaction made by Christ is primarily a rationally conceived compromise between the demand for punishment and the remission of punishment....But in Luther every trace of this rationalism has disappeared; it disappears, because the dualistic outlook is maintained, and because the victory over the curse and the wrath is in the fullest sense God's victory. It is God's act of victory, when Christ goes in under the divine wrath, and bears the burden of the punishment which on account of that wrath impends upon men. Thus the love of God breaks through the wrath; in the vicarious act of redemption the wrath is overcome by the love which is ultimately, as Luther says, die Natur Gottes. But the fact that the wrath is overcome means not

at all that it is to be regarded as only a pretended wrath, or that it ceases to exist; rather, through the atonement it is aufgehoben, transcended, in the Hegelian sense - that is, it remains latent in and behind the divine love, and forms the background of the work which the love fulfils.²³⁶

Examining this lengthy statement from Christus Victor, one can appreciate certain determinative features for Aulén's Luther interpretation regarding Christ's redemptive work. First, rationalistic presentations such as that of the Latin type are misleading, if not incorrect, since "Luther, if he is sure of anything, is sure that God's work in Christ of atonement, forgiveness, justification, bears the signature contra rationem et legem."²³⁷ Second, Luther's regard for God's wrath and love manifests a dualistic viewpoint whereby God's anger can only be overcome by "God himself, the divine blessing, which in Christ prevails over the wrath and the curse."²³⁸ Third, Aulén stresses the importance of Luther's understanding of God's wrath and the superiority of such a term to the sterile justice framework of the Latin type. He states that "in Luther the wrath of God takes the place of the retributive justice (justitia distributiva) of the medieval scheme," and that Luther prefers "the personal term to the chilly juridical term."²³⁹ Aulén demonstrates his awareness of the reality of God's opposition to evil because in Luther's understanding, the wrath of God "is the expressive phrase that shows God's will in its immediate and direct reaction to man's sin."²⁴⁰

Marc Lienhard's enunciation of the functional relationship between the Father and the Son in Luther's soteriology concurs with Aulén's interpretation in the Christus Victor proposal. This understanding relates directly to what Lienhard considers Luther's thematic concepts of redemption - reconciliation and combat.

Analyzing Christ's redemptive role, Lienhard reviews the contribution of Anselm's Cur Deus Homo. He understands that in Anselm's work and in the Latin atonement type, one "interprets the work of Christ in terms of penitence (satisfactio meritum) and admits a system of compensation for the fault by the substitutive work of Christ," with the result that "the miracle of reconciliation disappears in this rational system."²⁴¹ And Lienhard further indicates that this approach "displaces the wrath of God from the present to the future."²⁴² On the contrary, the early Church and in particular the Greek Fathers envisaged "a conflict by Christ against the hostile powers present in humanity, a conflict in which the wrath of God slipped into the background, behind the cosmic powers, but never entirely disappeared."²⁴³ For Lienhard, Anselm's soteriology obscures this vital element and thus weakens its validity:

In Anselm's system, Christ does not truly enter into the sinful situation of humanity; he does not experience the wrath of God and does not do battle, but pays the price necessary to safeguard the honor of God, so that God is able to pardon human beings on the basis of the superfluous merit acquired by Christ.²⁴⁴

In essence, Lienhard declares that even though "Anselm has deepened the concept of sin, as well as the vision of the holiness of God," he has, nevertheless, failed to appreciate the dramatic aspect of Christ's active role and the intensity of the forces of evil.²⁴⁵ All in all, Anselm's soteriology minimizes the reality of evil as oppressive and antagonistic, over and above its characteristic as an affront to God and the divinely-instituted order of creation. In this appraisal of Anselm, Lienhard agrees with Aulén's proposition.

A further area of concurrence issues from Lienhard's treatment of Luther's decisive themes of reconciliation and combat:

When Luther describes the saving work of Christ, he sometimes places the emphasis on reconciliation with God, and sometimes on the victory achieved by Christ over the powers which enslave human beings. His exposition often links the two themes.²⁴⁶

The work of Christ is thus described in different ways, both from the point of view of mediation, Christ suffering under the wrath of God and accomplishing the law, and from the point of combat,²⁴⁷ led against the powers which oppress human beings.

Hence, Lienhard's discussion of Luther's soteriology revolves around the twin notions of Christ as mediator and as combatant struggling against sin, death, the devil, the law, and God's wrath.

Delineating Christ's salvific role, Lienhard admits Luther's use of the diverse concepts and expressions inherited from the tradition before him.²⁴⁸ He agrees with Aulén that while Luther can speak of "meritum" and

"satisfactio," these terms are not employed within the rationally logistic framework of the Latin atonement type. Lienhard mentions the fact that Luther utilizes "satisfactio" ("Genugtuung"), but this term, like the concept of merits, belongs to a theology and spirituality which Luther himself judges deficient.²⁴⁹ He finds a solid ground of unity between Anselm and Luther in the Anselmian perception of the depth of sin and in the assertion that Christ's work addresses itself directly to the person of the Father.²⁵⁰ However, the author notes a distinct difference: Luther emphasizes more than Anselm that Christ does not work so much from outside upon God, but rather experiences a struggle within God himself - "the Son offering himself to the wrath of the Father in order to let love triumph and open the way to forgiveness."²⁵¹ Lienhard's evaluation of Luther in this matter corresponds to Aulén's atonement view.

Lienhard's basic soteriological interpretation of Luther centers on the themes of reconciliation and conflict, mediation and struggle. Unless the forces of evil are overcome and mankind is freed from its bondage to the conglomerate of evil, then God's enmity remains, and no true reconciliation is possible. While Lienhard's analysis assesses Luther's use of both these themes, Aulén's presentation focuses more pointedly on the struggle/combat aspect and the ensuing victory. Lienhard explains that this combat theme, resulting in Christ's victory and mankind's reconciliation, is to be found in a variety of Luther's

works - the Sermons, the Catechisms, and especially the (1535) Galatians Commentary.²⁵² Aulén refers to the same general sources when examining Luther in his book Christus Victor.²⁵³ To cite a cogent example of the dual themes of reconciliation and combat, Lienhard reviews Luther's exegesis of Matthew 2:1-12, the Gospel for the Epiphany, wherein Luther speaks of the sacerdotal and royal offices, the former expressing mediation and the latter the idea of sovereignty and struggle.²⁵⁴ Lienhard's stress on these two themes in Luther disclaims the satisfaction structure of the Latin atonement type.

The question of how the redemption achieved by Christ comes into the present, Lienhard attributes to Luther's notion of faith, the "fides Christi." Luther's struggle theme is intimately involved: "The redemptive work of Christ on the cross is actualized in some way in the fides Christi; the battle continues there."²⁵⁵ Similarly, Luther's use of the terms "sacramentum" and "exemplum" must be appreciated: "...the suffering of Christ is a sacramentum to the extent that the death of the old person and forgiveness of sins are given by it. It is an exemplum in the sense that believers must imitate Christ and suffer in their turn."²⁵⁶ In no sense, however, can the primacy of God's offer of grace and salvation be compromised by human efforts. Luther's thought remains thoroughly centered on God.²⁵⁷

This concept of redemption as brought into the present by faith in Christ finds expression in Aulén's thoroughgoing soteriological theocentricity and in such expressions as "salvation is atonement, and atonement is salvation."²⁵⁸ This coincidence of salvation and atonement is a dominant quality of the dramatic view of Christ's work.²⁵⁹

For Aulén's atonement presentation, Luther's manner of personifying Christ's opponents in "quasi mythological" language holds a place of importance. Lienhard states: "One is struck by the way in which Luther personifies faith, the devil, sin, death, and by the images or quasi mythological turns that he employs on these subjects. Death, this tyrant, engages in combat with Christ, but encounters in him an immortal life. Satan wishes to devour Christ, but it is Christ who on the contrary devours him."²⁶⁰ Luther's Commentary on Galatians (1535) abounds with such mythological images and figures.²⁶¹

Throughout his theological endeavors, Luther amply utilizes the notion of the "devil deceived" as found in the Fathers, especially Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory the Great.²⁶² Aulén relates that "Luther seems to have a special fondness for the grossest symbols of all, especially that of the deception of the devil."²⁶³ Delighting in violent expressions, colorful language and realistic images, Luther's discussion of mankind's redemption involves this paradoxical inversion of what one expects: the sinner becomes the saved, the victim becomes the victor, death

bespeaks life, and victory is achieved in the depths of defeat.

Lienhard's interpretation of Luther's Christology draws attention to an acute feature in Aulén's classical atonement view: the problem of Christ as punished. Does Luther's stress on Christ's bearing the punishment of God's wrath pose a difficulty for Aulén's picture of a good and loving God? How does Aulén handle the punishment aspect of the atonement? Does Aulén's classic atonement idea refine some of Luther's statements on this matter?

Lienhard's treatment of this particular question revolves around the dual points of reconciliation and struggle unto victory. He sees how "Luther describes Christ, who is delivered up to the wrath of the Father, bearing the punishment deserved by sinful humanity and reconciling God and humankind," and likewise how Luther "speaks also, from another point, of the victorious combat, led by Christ against the law, sin, the devil, and death - those powers which enslave human beings because of the wrath of God."²⁶⁴ This pressing question of "bearing the punishment" deserves attention.

Luther's understanding of punishment focuses on the concept of substitution. Christ stands in sinful mankind's place and takes upon himself the consequences of God's wrath. Lienhard points out those passages in the Commentary on Galatians (1535) wherein Luther interprets the meaning of Galatians 3:13 as indicating that Christ takes upon himself

the consequences of mankind's infidelity.²⁶⁵ Christ becomes the "sinner":

In his body he carries the sins of all. Hence, "He is not now an innocent person and without sin, is not now the Son of God born of the Virgin; but a sinner, who has and bears the sin of Paul, who was a blasphemer, an oppressor and a persecutor; of Peter, who denied Christ; of David, who was an adulterer, a murderer and caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord."²⁶⁶

clearly the idea of substitution emerges in Luther's Christ who sacrifices himself for sinful mankind.

In his book Christus Victor Aulén discusses this concept of substitution: "...Christ goes in under the divine wrath, and bears the burden of the punishment which on account of that wrath impends upon men."²⁶⁷ Aulén however emphasizes that the endurance of punishment always must be understood in light of Luther's "dualistic outlook," whereby the antinomy between "the divine curse, the wrath, and the divine blessing, the love" leads ultimately to the victory of God's love which is "die Natur Gottes."²⁶⁸ Although this endurance of punishment for evil may indeed seem similar to the distributive justice aspect of the Latin type of atonement, Aulén underlines the fact that here there exists "the most radical divergence."²⁶⁹ As Aulén sees it, Luther's use of the "personal term," wrath, to convey that "God is intensely active and personally engaged in judging sinful man and maintaining the order of grace," manifests the immediate and direct opposition of God's very nature to all that is evil.²⁷⁰ Aulén's exposition mirrors Luther's

concern for God's wrath and the victory over it attained by Christ's active self-giving in divine love.

For the dramatic atonement view, a further problem arises: Luther's substitutionary idea can be misinterpreted easily as a notion of vicarious satisfaction. Aulén finds this unacceptable and contrary to his interpretation of Luther's basic thought in the question. In Aulén's thinking, Luther's concept of substitution must maintain the sovereignty of God's love and cannot be considered as a type of substitutionary satisfaction. While not discussing Luther specifically, Aulén's comments on "the fundamental difference between satisfactio vicaria and what could be called sacrificium vicarium" in his book on Dag Hammarskjöld's Markings are apropos to understanding Aulén's interpretation of Luther.²⁷¹ The context of this particular passage centers on Hammarskjöld's concept of "the creative act of sacrifice" and its relationship to a proper image of God. Aulén proposes:

...it must be emphatically argued that there is not the slightest reason for saying that Hammarskjöld accepts "the dogma of satisfactio vicaria." The standard meaning of that doctrine is that God through the suffering of Christ received a satisfaction, a sufficient compensation for the sin of humanity, and that God thereby was "placated" and "reconciled." A doctrine of that kind is quite irreconcilable with the image of God found in Markings.²⁷²

Speaking of Dag Hammarskjöld here, Aulén reveals his own unshakable attitude that Christ's sacrifice is a vicarious one, but not in the sense of vicarious satisfaction.

Aulén's reading of Luther's views on substitution demonstrates this sharp difference.

In regard to this theological problem, one can pose a telling question: how does Aulén interpret the notion of punishment in relationship to Christ's sacrifice by which the Redeemer takes upon himself the consequences of God's wrath? Aulén provides a clear answer in The Drama and the Symbols when he describes Christ's sacrifice as accomplished in "obedience to God" and in "solidarity with man."²⁷³

Aulén's words convey the care with which the idea of punishment must be handled and the implications this point carries for the image of God:

...it would lose its meaning and it would ruin the Christian image of God if we were to regard the sacrifice and suffering of Christ as a punishment which God laid upon the innocent, to be the equivalent of, and the compensation for, the punishment which mankind deserved to suffer.²⁷⁴

...this did not mean that the crucifixion was a punishment that God laid upon him and required of him. It was men who crucified him, not God. That he submitted to the judgment of God that falls on human sin did not mean that this judgment applied to him personally. It meant instead that the judgment fell on him in his solidarity with those who were under the power of sin.²⁷⁵

These two principal themes of Christ's active obedience to God and of his endurance of punishment, not as directed by God toward Christ in his innocence, but as relating to Christ's solidarity with fallen mankind, are hallmark features of Aulén's development of the Christus Victor idea and of his interpretation of Luther's substitutionary statements.

Lienhard's analysis of Luther also suggests Aulén's affirmation of the active obedience of Christ: "The victory is won...by the fact that Jesus Christ has freely obeyed....To reduce Jesus Christ to the level of a passive victim on whom the punishment falls would be a travesty of Luther's thought."²⁷⁶ For Lienhard, Luther's presentation of Christ as undergoing the punishment which rightfully falls upon sinful mankind reflects Luther's "insistence on the real solidarity of Christ with sinners."²⁷⁷

Along with this same question, Aulén offers some pertinent comments in The Faith of the Christian Church. Considering Christ's bearing of punishment, he observes pointedly: "But most significant for Christian faith is the fact that divine love in complete solidarity with men assumes the burden of all the suffering, the guilt and the punishment, which has been occasioned by sin."²⁷⁸ Aulén further cautions that "this affirmation of Christ's suffering under divine wrath does not imply that the wrath is directed to Christ and his work."²⁷⁹ By means of such a careful distinction, Aulén maintains the integrity of the image of a loving God; the endurance of punishment must be understood from the viewpoint of Christ's solidarity with sinful humankind.

Following this line of thought, Aulén illustrates the obedience of Christ (Heb. 9:14; Phil. 2:8) emphasizing the active and divine character of that obedience.²⁸⁰ He advances certain qualities of this divine sacrifice: a)

divine love does not remain apart from what takes place; it is active in the very heart of the matter; b) there is no limit to the self-giving of the divine love; c) the Christian idea of sacrifice has radically reversed all non-Christian sacrificial conceptions; d) God receives the sacrifice; but it is God himself who makes the sacrifice; e) this sacrifice is perfect and complete.²⁸¹

Treating of punishment in conjunction with the idea of self-sacrifice, Aulén passes on to the question of its vicariousness. All of these notions relate to Aulén's position vis-à-vis Luther's statements on punishment and substitution. Here again, Aulén admits the possible use of terminology such as satisfaction, but in a different sense from that of scholastic theology.²⁸² He explains that satisfaction terminology can have a limited use:

In this connection one could use the old and much misinterpreted expression, satisfaction, but in a sense widely different from that which it has in scholastic theology. For Christian faith it is clear that Christ has "made satisfaction." The terms satis, "sufficient," is, to be sure, entirely too weak to express the significance of the work of Christ. But ignoring this, it can well be said that Christ has "made satisfaction," not only in the sense that through his obedience unto death he has "satisfied" that God who, precisely because of his love, must radically judge all that is evil, but also and primarily in the sense that he has "adequately performed" all that God's love demanded. In so doing he has also made "satisfaction" for us.²⁸³

In this context, as well as in his comments on Luther in Christus Victor, Aulén insists that satisfaction terminology must be interpreted and qualified. He avows that Luther incorporates the Latin type of satisfaction terminology into

his "dualistic theme," stressing not a system of merits but rather "exhibiting the strength of the divine love."²⁸⁴

Likewise, Aulén warns of the dangers of an uncritical employment of the term "vicarious." And here he pushes forward with a new sense for the word. His statement in The Faith of the Christian Church amplifies the presentation in Christus Victor. He rules out any "mechanical and automatic transfer of our burden to him" which results "whenever the organic connection between the work of Christ and divine love is even slightly ignored."²⁸⁵ Aulén then details a noteworthy fact: "The vicarious suffering of divine love does not automatically remove the burden, but it gives new power to bear it; vicarious love does not end the struggle, but it furnishes a new possibility to carry on the struggle."²⁸⁶ By this statement Aulén proceeds beyond any static concept of vicariousness or substitutionary punishment to Luther's stance regarding the on-going nature of justification through faith, centered in Christ's atoning work. He also contends that in this sacrificial bearing of punishment the victory is achieved: "When divine love bears the burden of divine wrath, the wrath is transformed into and fused with love."²⁸⁷ Aulén's similar observation, "The wrath against sin does not cease, but is fused with love and in this sense 'canceled,'"²⁸⁸ coheres with his statement in the Luther section of Christus Victor that through the atonement God's wrath is aufgehoben, transcended by remaining "latent in and behind the divine love."²⁸⁹

Throughout this entire exposition, Aulén defends his proposal that such an approach to Jesus' role in confronting God's wrath and in bearing its painful consequences lies wholly within the intention of Luther's reform and remains consonant with the pattern of his theological thought.

Marc Lienhard's book on Luther's Christology probes in detail Luther's view concerning the divinity-humanity relationship in the person of Jesus the Savior. This relates directly to the classic atonement type. Aulén has been criticized for his interpretation which "emphasizes the role of the divine nature at the expense of the human nature."²⁹⁰ Aulén remains keenly aware of these accusations of "docetism" as he points out in the Preface to The Drama and the Symbols; yet, nevertheless, he stands firm in his conviction.²⁹¹ In the Luther section of Christus Victor, Aulén highlights four pertinent facts: a) in Luther, the Incarnation is integrally connected with the atonement and "there is no thought of an offering made to God by Christ simply as man, in his human nature";²⁹² b) "All depends on the assertion that it is God himself who in Christ overcomes the tyrants";²⁹³ c) "the whole view is dualistic and dramatic";²⁹⁴ d) later Lutheran theology differed from the Latin type only verbally in that "the divine nature of Christ, which cooperated with the human nature in virtue of the hypostatic union, was regarded as giving an infinite value to the work affected by the human nature as the 'agent'."²⁹⁵ In The Faith of the Christian Church Aulén

mentions again that the scholastic, Latin type of atonement breaks the intimate connection between the Incarnation and atonement by asserting that "the 'divine' in Christ is significant only in so far as it gives added value to the work of the 'human nature'."²⁹⁶ Once more, Aulén contends that he is not opposed to the concept of Christ as mankind's representative, but that the real objection concerns "the way in which a distinction is made between what Christ does 'as God' and what he does 'as man,'" a division, contrary to the meaning of the Christian confession.²⁹⁷

In examining this humanity-divinity relationship in Luther, Lienhard faults Aulén for stressing the divine nature to such an extent that "the humanity becomes reduced to the place where the combat occurs."²⁹⁸ This affirmation identifies a central point in the study by Yves Congar which Lienhard reviews and which relates to Luther's theology and Aulén's interpretation.²⁹⁹

Summarizing Luther's Christological thinking, Y. Congar details Luther's tendency to characterize Christ's link with mankind "tropologically," in accord with what this relationship means and does for the believer in the present dimension.³⁰⁰ Basing his comments on Luther's works on Romans, Hebrews, and Galatians (1535), Congar surveys the notions of "exemplar-exemplum," "fides Christi," and "admirabile commercium" ("wonderful exchange").³⁰¹ He concludes that for Luther, "there is no action on our part, but simply a substitution of Christ's justice (therefore

extrinseca, aliena, non domestica) for our sins, because it is all God's work, opus Dei."³⁰² Furthermore, Congar insists that "for Luther, the whole body of Catholic institutions, as a collection of external means of grace, was the antithesis of the opus Dei in Christo"; and the author proceeds to question "what meaning and what function could Christ's humanity have in his [Luther's] eyes?"³⁰³ Lienhard pinpoints Congar's objection that it is this question of the divine Alleinwirksamkeit which critically sets Luther apart from the traditional "Catholic" viewpoint.³⁰⁴

In this context a crucial problem arises for Gustaf Aulén's interpretation of Luther in his Christus Victor idea. Discussing this Alleinwirksamkeit Gottes, Congar refers specifically to Aulén's statement in Christus Victor:

All depends on the assertion that it is God himself who in Christ overcomes the tyrants. It is at the same time evident that the deity of Christ is not for Luther a bare metaphysical dogma, still less a 'physical' doctrine; for in the work of redemption the actual agent is no other and no less than God's own blessing, righteousness, and life.³⁰⁵

Referring to Aulén, R. Bring, A. Nygren, and H. Lindroth, Congar declares that these Swedish theologians "have thrown into very clear relief the Lutheran concept of redemption as a drama which is played out in Christ in the reality of his death and resurrection but whose only actor is ultimately God."³⁰⁶ Congar characterizes Christ's humanity as "the theatre for this drama," the cross and resurrection as "its acts or scenario," the devil as defeated "by falling into

his own trap," but that nevertheless, "the dramatic conflict takes place in God himself, a struggle between justice and grace, wrath and love."³⁰⁷ As Congar describes it, Luther's view, in itself and as elucidated by these Swedish theologians, devalues Christ's humanity in the salvific drama.

Widening his argument, Congar calls attention to Luther's chief defect in this question: Luther fails in attributing a lucid idea of causality in Christ's work - "It seems clear that the idea of a causality in Christ has become entirely alien to him [to Luther]."³⁰⁸ Congar similarly accuses Luther of not appreciating the organic unity between Christ and his members in a theology of the gratia capitis.³⁰⁹ Likewise, in spite of Luther's use of the "communication of properties," his lack of a proper ontological approach to the Trinity has hindered the clarity of Luther's interpretation.³¹⁰ In sum, Congar portrays Luther's system of thought as "dualistic," while his basic religious affirmation is "monistic."³¹¹ Congar's problem can be explicitly stated: "In Luther's works, however, there is no consideration of the sacred humanity of Christ, of his gratia capitis, of any causality in the head with regard to the members."³¹² He contends that this concept of the Alleinwirksamkeit Gottes reveals Luther as a "monist in his affirmation of salvation as an act of God," a monism in which Luther "cannot avoid a certain taint of monophysitism," not in the strict meaning but in an

"economic" sense regarding the contention that God alone acts in the economy of salvation.³¹³ Congar's critical observations affect Aulén's Christus Victor presentation, not only because he specifically cites Aulén and the other Lundensians, but also because Congar expands on the essential question regarding Christ's humanity.

In surveying Congar's objections, Lienhard underscores several important points for Aulén's Christus Victor proposal. Lienhard maintains that Luther envisions the salvific drama as taking place not just in but through Christ: "...it is a drama passing through this earth, through the Incarnation of the Son, through his free obedience as a human being, through his sacrifice freely accepted, and through his act of suffering."³¹⁴ For Luther, Christ is not "a passive object" neither is he "simply the place where 'God' is present"; all modalistic interpretations are excluded.³¹⁵ Lienhard also explains that Luther's theology deliberately turns away from the speculative, and that often his principal intention is to oppose those who exalt human activity to the detriment of God's sovereignty in salvation.³¹⁶ Likewise, Lienhard avows that Luther values the "human" obedience and activity of Jesus Christ; furthermore, he insists that "to affirm that God is the author of salvation is not, for Luther, to exclude the activity of the man Jesus, but it is to combat the idea of merit."³¹⁷ Lienhard highlights a necessary element for understanding Luther's stress on the divine

aspect of redemption: "...he [Luther] is preoccupied with the concern to preserve the doctrine of justification by faith alone and by analogy to insist on the solus Deus of redemption."³¹⁸

Although Gustaf Aulén's presentation in the Christus Victor lectures may leave him open to Congar's criticism regarding an integral role for the humanity of Christ, nevertheless, Aulén clarifies his thinking in his later works. In The Drama and the Symbols Aulén pointedly insists that what "we have here is a unitary and indivisible life's work" which cannot be divided but must be appreciated "from a double aspect": "From one side, the whole life's work is a human work, through and through, but, from the other side, it is a divine work, through and through."³¹⁹ Aulén rejects all attempts to separate what Christ did qua Deus from he accomplished qua homo.³²⁰ He himself handles this distinction not in a partitive or quantitative manner (such as $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$), but rather as a qualitative description of a solitary reality which lies beyond the range of human experience and knowledge. Aulén's employment of a "dual aspect" methodology maintains a steady balance between the human and divine characterizations of the one Christ Jesus and may enable the observer to get away from the "partitive division" so often evidenced in speaking of the Christ's two natures.

Along the line of Congar's treatment, one must readily acknowledge that the ontological categories Congar searches

for in Luther's exposition do not interest the Reformer. Congar admits this himself.³²¹ Similarly, the inherent anti-metaphysical bias of the Lundensian theology rules out any presentation in this framework for Aulén's Christology.³²² Hence, Congar's demand for a categorical "causality" in the theology of Luther is doomed from the start.³²³

In conjunction with Congar's critique, the central assertion of Luther, and of Aulén following him, stands out: Christ is the real source of salvation. The motifs of reconciliation and struggle-victory graphically signify this essential principle. And while Luther, given his preoccupation with the problem of justification, overstresses the divinity aspect, nonetheless, "In other passages, Luther shows more clearly the importance of this human nature for our redemption."³²⁴

Congar's insistence on a "causality category," clarifying how Christ's salvation affects mankind, demonstrates that his thinking takes place in a different pattern of thought from that of Luther. Similarly, his consideration of Christ's human nature tends to veer away from Christ to the activity of human nature in itself.³²⁵ This latter point finds no acceptance in Luther's approach nor in that of Aulén's dramatic atonement view. Posing this type of causality from the side of mankind reflects a different position than that of demonstrating the true human activity of the Christ. It appears that Yves Congar's

search for an instrumental "causality" in the salvific bestowal of grace indicates a tendency to conceive of Christ's relationship to mankind in terms that overplay an "organic" type of unity rather than the sacramental-mystical one which it is.

Gustaf Aulén's exposition of the atonement does not ignore these crucial issues in the complex thinking of Luther. In evaluating these objections, there exists the possibility of a renewed appreciation for Luther's efforts and for the contribution of theologians such as Aulén.

Paralleling these comments, Ian D. Kingston Siggins presents a compelling analysis in his work, Martin Luther's Doctrine of Christ.³²⁶ Siggins reflects that Luther's Christology is marked by its historical realism, its soteriological orientation, and its insistence on the uniqueness, necessity, and all-sufficiency of Christ.³²⁷ Likewise, he cautions that "Luther does not use soteriological titles as fixed dogmatic categories."³²⁸

Siggins greatly values Luther's emphasis on God's love as the ultimate source of mankind's salvation: "In a way which makes the search for dualisms a complicated irrelevancy, Luther movingly places this appeasement in the context of God's love."³²⁹ Siggins' statement here disputes Aulén's dualistic presentation; and Siggins remains adamant in his opinion that "Luther's use of the victory motif, too, is applied with singleness of purpose to the assertion of Christ's all-sufficiency - not to the description of any

cosmic dualism."³³⁰ This author contends that Luther's exaltation of the person of Christ in the salvific work "completely transmutes Anselm's doctrine of the abundance of Christ's merits, or Thomas' superabundans satisfactio."³³¹

In his study Siggins criticizes Aulén's view especially regarding the notion that Luther excludes any type of satisfaction idea:

But at the risk of the futility Aulén predicts, Luther's own words seem to make the endeavor inevitable. For to Luther sin-bearing (the sacrifice motif) and atonement or payment_{for} sin (the satisfaction motif) go hand in hand.³³²

The author insists that this relationship between sacrifice and satisfaction is the decisive factor in regard to reconciliation.³³³

Expanding on his defense of Anselm, Siggins proposes that Anselm's concept of justice is a positive one that goes beyond juridical categories, and that in this area Luther "shares common ground with Anselm."³³⁴ He observes:

"Luther's understanding of Christ our righteousness goes far beyond Anselm; yet if Luther's doctrine is immeasurably richer because he found his 'necessary reasons' in the Word rather than in dialectic, it remains true that he shares common ground with Anselm."³³⁵ On the other hand, as Siggins details Christ's place in the salvific scheme, he touches upon an important part of Aulén's critique of the Anselmian method: "The Passion and death of Christ are of infinite worth, and 'satisfaction' understood merely as a

quid pro quo is clearly inadequate to describe Christ's achievement."³³⁶

Aulén's chief criticism in his *Christus Victor* proposal does not concern itself principally with satisfaction terminology, but rather rejects the theological distortion of a rationalistic, anthropocentric salvation. Siggins' discussion of the crucial role for justification in Luther's theology exemplifies this:

For Luther sola fide is simply another way of saying a solo Christo;

...for Luther, as for Paul writing to the Galatians, justification by faith apart from works became the decisive issue simply because the error they had to combat was the error of work-righteousness, the system of merit;

Not justification, but Christ alone, is the material norm of his theology and the lifeblood of his faith.³³⁷

While at first Siggins appears to oppose Aulén's Luther interpretation, his position eventually comes to a recognizable compatibility with Aulén's own intentions. For instance, Aulén would concur heartily with Siggins' affirmation that in the jucundissimum duellum, "Luther shatters the quantitative implications of scholastic thinking about atonement by insisting that the efficacy of Christ is utterly incommensurate with all the power of the tyrants."³³⁸

A major point of Siggins' treatment is that of the "unique all-sufficiency" of Christ in Luther's thought: "...Luther has taken over a body of imagery whose original intention he explicitly and vehemently rejects, and by

harnessing it to the assertion of Christ's unique all-sufficiency, exploits it for the Gospel."³³⁹ Such a theological assertion blends easily with Aulén's desire to remove any threat to the theocentricity of Christ's salvific work. This affirmation of Luther's theme of "by Christ alone" and Siggins' observation that "Luther often intends much more by the word 'justification' than the formal or systematic content of 'the doctrine' of justification,"³⁴⁰ both bear relevance to a soteriology that breaks the narrow confines of the satisfaction scheme.

Siggins' study highlights many of the critical areas of Luther's soteriology which Aulén considers. The final judgment regarding the fidelity of these theologians to the Reformer's purpose and expression lies in probing Luther's own words.

F. The Classic Atonement Idea in Luther's Own Words

In his soteriological presentation, Aulén turns to Luther's own statements in order to find support for the classic atonement idea. He remains adamant in his claim that for Martin Luther, "the dramatic view of the work of Christ stands in organic relation with his theological outlook as a whole."³⁴¹ Since Aulén's citations of Luther's works are brief in the published Christus Victor, there arises the need to explore Luther at closer range and in some greater detail.

Aulén's treatment in the Olaus Petri lectures quotes Luther's concise Christological summaries from his Catechisms. For Aulén, these offer a clear and succinct beginning for an investigation of Luther's thinking. Aulén repeats Luther's wording from the Small Catechism: "He has delivered, purchased, and won me, a lost and doomed man, from all sins, from death and the devil's power."³⁴² The central redemption theme emerges as one of liberation from bondage and oppression.

Similarly, Aulén considers a parallel summary from Luther's Large Catechism in which Luther amplifies this notion. Luther's expressions from his exposition of the Second Article of the Creed fit well with Aulén's description of a dramatic atonement:

I believe that Jesus Christ, true Son of God has become my Lord. What is it to "become a Lord"? It means that he has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death and from all evil. Before this I had no Lord and King but was captive under the power of the devil. I was condemned to death and entangled in sin and blindness....He has snatched us, poor lost creatures, from the jaws of hell, won us, made us free,³⁴³ and restored us to the Father's favor and grace.

Luther here underlines the concept of lordship in relation to Christ's action which "has brought us back from the devil to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and now keeps us safe there."³⁴⁴ Using biblical terminology, Luther speaks also of "making satisfaction for me and paying what I owed, not with silver and gold but with his own precious blood."³⁴⁵ In spite of such "satisfaction" terminology, Luther's intention is focused on Christ's

lordship and victory: "All this in order to become my Lord...he rose again from the dead, swallowed up and devoured death, and finally ascended into heaven and assumed dominion at the right hand of the Father. The devil and all powers, therefore, must be subject to him and lie beneath his feet...."³⁴⁶

Surveying what Luther expresses in the Catechisms, Aulén finds solid support for his contention that "in those places where it is altogether necessary for him [Luther] to express himself with the greatest possible care and the greatest possible exactness, as, for instance, in the Catechisms, he always returns to the dramatic idea."³⁴⁷ Presenting his Christus Victor idea, Aulén draws attention to the essential role played by the Reformer's thought because Luther has "restored to its central position the ancient motif of conflict and victory."³⁴⁸ Aulén indicates that, while Luther may indeed have employed the terminology prevalent in the Church of his time, nevertheless, his catechetical efforts, his hymns, and his theological studies give evidence of the classic idea of atonement. Among these works, Luther's (1535) Lectures on Galatians holds an important place.³⁴⁹

In the Christus Victor lectures, Aulén specifically quotes at length Luther's comments on the struggle between the "curse" and the "blessing" - God's wrath and his grace - in the context of Galatians 3:13.³⁵⁰ Luther's comments here and elsewhere in this commentary illustrate Luther's

tendency toward a dramatic atonement position. Aulén's own Christus Victor idea needs to be evaluated in light of Luther's explanation.

Interpreting Galatians 2:19 ("For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God."), Luther gives evidence of certain techniques which he uses in the atonement question and which relate to Aulén's theology.³⁵¹ Luther delights in figures of speech that involve a paradoxical inversion of the presumed order of things, e.g. death bespeaks life, the disease becomes the cure, defeat issues into victory; he likewise amply utilizes a type of exchange or substitution, e.g. Christ changes places with the sinner, the holy one becomes a devil to the devil. Luther states:

Thus he [Paul] opposes the law to the law. This is most delicious language. In Scripture, especially in Paul, law is often opposed to law, sin to sin, death to death, captivity to captivity, the devil to the devil, hell to hell, altar to altar, lamb to lamb, Passover to Passover.

Romans 8:3: "For sin he condemned sin"; Ps.68:18 and Eph. 4:8: "He led captivity captive"; Hos.14:14: "O death, I will be your death. O hell, I will be your destruction."³⁵²

Luther's statements presenting such a paradoxical inversion set the background for a dramatic view of atonement. Luther not only clearly expresses himself but also accentuates the intensity of the salvific drama:

Thus with the sweetest names Christ is called my law, my sin, and my death, in opposition to the law, sin, and death, even though in fact he is nothing but sheer liberty, righteousness, life, and eternal salvation. Therefore he became law to

law, sin to sin, and death to death, in order that he might redeem me from the curse of the law, justify me, and make me alive. And so Christ is both: While he is the law, he is liberty; while he is sin, he is righteousness; and while he is death, he is life. For by the very fact that he permitted the law to accuse him, sin to damn him, and death to devour him, he abrogated the law, damned sin, destroyed death, and justified and saved me. Thus Christ is a poison against the law, sin, and death, and simultaneously a remedy to regain liberty, righteousness, and eternal life.³⁵³

Luther's Galatians abounds with such figures of paradoxical inversion adding to the dramatic sense of Christ's redemptive role.

A typical passage wherein Luther describes Christ in such inverted terms is found in Luther's comments on Galatians 2:19. He speaks of Christ defeating the devil by becoming a devil to the evil one:

Mr. Devil, do not rage so. Just take it easy! For there is one who is called Christ. In him I believe. He has abrogated the law, damned sin, abolished death, and destroyed hell. And he is your devil, you devil, because he has captured and conquered you, so that you cannot harm me any longer or anyone else who believes in him.³⁵⁴

Luther finds these Pauline expressions much to his liking, and in the Galatians exposition he pointedly details this exchange. He portrays Christ as the "tormentor" of the devil, as "a stronger devil" against the devil who sets mankind free: "For Christ is my devil against the devil, that I might be a son of God; he destroys hell, that I might have the kingdom of heaven."³⁵⁵

In regard to Luther's notion of Christ taking the place of the sinner, Luther's graphic explanation of

Galatians 3:13 stands out vividly:

...he sent his Son into the world, heaped all the sins of all men upon him, and said to him: "Be Peter the denier; Paul the persecutor, blasphemer, and assaulter; David the adulterer; the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise; the thief on the cross. In short, be the person of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men. And see to it that you pay and make satisfaction for them."³⁵⁶

Even though Luther's passage speaks of satisfaction to God for the sake of man's sinfulness, nevertheless, the context indicates the intimate identification of Christ with sinful mankind in a sense of struggle and final victory.

Luther's use of such paradoxical inversion can be seen also in his employment of the figure of the bronze serpent whereby the cause of the distress becomes the source of the remedy. Again, the meaning centers on struggle and victory in line with Aulén's affirmation of the classic atonement idea. Luther manifests this same posture in dealing with Galatians 2:19,³⁵⁷ and likewise with Galatians 3:13.³⁵⁸ An extensive treatment of the scriptural image is found in his Sermons on the Gospel of St. John in the exposition of John 3:14-15.³⁵⁹ Once more, the context is one of Christ's identification with the forces of evil in a paradoxical manner by which he attacks and subdues them; in this conflict mankind's redemption is accomplished. Luther gives full play to such figurative language:

This symbolized the fact that God would let his Son descend from heaven and be nailed to the cross, where he, too, hangs like a serpent or a worm, the object of scorn and contempt, as Christ himself laments in Psalm 22:6. But whoever

believes in this crucified Christ will not be lost and perish but will have everlasting life, just as those who looked at the bronze serpent³⁶⁰ in the wilderness did not die but were saved.

Yes, he resembles the serpent which got us into trouble in Paradise, that is, the devil. He was so despised, condemned, and rejected by the world that he was finally sentenced to an ignominious death and hanged as an archvillain among the murderers.³⁶¹

I for my part will still hold to Christ and regard him as the bronze serpent. In reality, of course,³⁶² he is not a serpent; he is the Lamb of God....

Luther's colorful use of the biblical image of the bronze serpent demonstrates Aulén's significant contention that for Luther, "the dualistic outlook is maintained," since "the victory over the curse and the wrath is in the fullest sense God's victory."³⁶³

The Reformer's analysis of Galatians 2:19 illustrates Luther's stress on Christ as the victor over all the forces of oppression. Luther's words picture this triumph vividly: "Only Christ takes away the law, kills my sin, destroys my death in his body, and in this way empties hell, judges the devil, crucifies him, and throws him down into hell."³⁶⁴

Once again, Luther's paradoxical inversion is apparent and concurs with Aulén's understanding of Luther's atonement view as dualistic and dramatic. The Commentary on Galatians (1535) is filled with Luther's vibrant descriptions of this "joyous duel" (jucundissimum duellum) leading to salvation and life: "...the law battling against the law, in order to become liberty to me; sin battling against sin, in order to

become righteousness to me; death battling against death, in order that I might have life."³⁶⁵

Luther's picturesque terminology depicting Christ's struggle and victory includes the popular Patristic idea of the deception of the devil regarding Christ's humanity and divinity. As Aulén declares in Christus Victor, "Luther seems to have a special fondness for the grossest symbols of all, especially that of the deception of the devil."³⁶⁶ The devil attacks the humanity of Christ, much as a fish takes the baitworm, and is ensnared by the "hook" of the Lord's divinity. Luther's commentary on Galatians 3:10 includes the figure: "Nor did the humanity conquer sin and death; but the hook that was concealed under the worm, at which the devil struck, conquered and devoured the devil, who was attempting to devour the worm."³⁶⁷ In his Hebrews commentary, Luther likewise draws the same picture in his portrayal of Christ's destruction of the power of death and the devil by using the devil's own trap: "He destroyed the devil, not by a work of God but by a work of the devil himself. For this is the most glorious kind of victory, namely, to pierce the adversary with his own weapon and to slay him with his own sword...."³⁶⁸ For Luther, not only does this figure picture the devil as deceived, but it also depicts the victory's ultimate source, the divinity of Christ: "For just as Christ was at once a mortal and an immortal Person, he was indeed subject to death by reason of his humanity; but because his whole Person could not be

slain, it happened that death failed, and the devil succumbed in slaying him; and thus death was swallowed up and devoured in life."³⁶⁹

In Luther's Sermons on St. John's Gospel, the devil deception figure appears prominently. Luther employs it in speaking of Jesus' power as true God and really man; Luther's graphic words convey his theological viewpoint:

For the hook, which is the divinity of Christ, was concealed under the earthworm. The devil swallowed it with his jaws when Christ died and was buried. But it ripped his belly so that he could not retain it but had to disgorge it. He ate death for himself.³⁷⁰

Reflecting on John 3:16 in his sermons, Luther pinpoints a variation on this figure by speaking of God's giving the devil "a little pill which he would gleefully devour, but which would create a great rumpus in his belly and in the world."³⁷¹ Luther's intention focuses itself always on the victory achieved by the divine Person of Christ: "For this Person is God; and since both God and man in one indivisible Person entered into the belly of death and the devil, death ate a morsel that ripped his stomach open."³⁷² Christ is truly "death's destroyer."³⁷³

For Gustaf Aulén's dramatic atonement view, Luther's use of the devil deceived serves several purposes. First, the metaphor presents a setting of conflict and struggle in which one of the combatants will face ultimate defeat. Second, the figure is connected with another important theme for Luther, the notion of "God hidden and revealed" ("Deus absconditus et revelatus") as Aulén specifically mentions in

Christus Victor.³⁷⁴ Third, this vivid description aptly discloses the reality of Christ's Person; he is true man and at the same time embodies the power of a genuine divine nature whereby all the forces of bondage are vanquished.

Concerning the question of the humanity and divinity of Christ in the redemptive drama, Aulén insists on "a continuity of divine operation,"³⁷⁵ and on the integral unity between the Incarnation and atonement, between Christ's human side and the divine nature.³⁷⁶ When Aulén affirms in Christus Victor that "all depends on the assertion that it is God himself who in Christ overcomes the tyrants,"³⁷⁷ he does so not to denigrate Christ's human side, but rather to safeguard the theocentricity of mankind's salvation and God's sovereignty vis-à-vis any human merits for redemption. Luther's noteworthy commentary on Galatians 3:13 regarding the humanity and divinity of Christ likewise reflects Luther's attempt to safeguard the theocentricity of salvation, since Luther connects this exposition to the problematic question of faith and good works. In this sense Luther links his ideas on atonement with his concept of salvation by faith. His treatment of Galatians 3:13 bears significant importance; however, its true meaning stems from the context in which it is situated:

The kingly authority of the divinity is given to Christ the man, not because of his humanity but because of his divinity. For the divinity alone created all things, without the cooperation of the humanity. Nor did the humanity conquer sin and death; but the hook that was concealed under the worm, at which the devil struck, conquered and devoured the devil, who was attempting to devour

the worm. Therefore the humanity would not have accomplished anything by itself; but the divinity, joined with the humanity, did it alone, and the humanity did it on account of the divinity. So here faith alone justifies and does everything; nevertheless, it is attributed to works on account of faith.³⁷⁸

In this passage, Luther plainly emphasizes the need for a theological understanding of these questions "according to a new and theological grammar" by which these concepts acquire a new meaning.³⁷⁹ Developing his thoughts in relation to such questions as the divinity-humanity of Christ in salvation, and faith-good works in justification, Luther seeks to preserve the primacy of the theocentric without denying the integral involvement of human, personal action. A particular passage clarifies Luther's intention:

Therefore in theology let faith always be the divinity of works, diffused throughout the works in the same way that the divinity is throughout the humanity of Christ. Anyone who touches the heat in the heated iron touches the iron; and whoever has touched the skin of Christ has actually touched God. Therefore faith is the "do-all" in works, if I may use this expression.³⁸⁰

Although Luther's statement here concerns faith and works, Luther's thinking relates to his general concept of the "communication of properties" in the person of Christ.³⁸¹ This whole matter is important for Aulén's dramatic view of atonement since many crucial questions have arisen concerning Aulén's interpretation of Luther's soteriology in regard to the humanity and divinity of Christ. To these criticisms, Aulén responds: while Luther's intention was to maintain the properly theological

view of salvation, those who later followed him in Lutheran orthodoxy abandoned the Reformer's position and reverted to "the same lack of organic connection between the Incarnation and the atonement which had always been typical of the Latin doctrine."³⁸² They did so by failing to appreciate the "organic connection" of the divine and human in Christ, and by presenting atonement from the viewpoint of the human nature as the "agent" bearing infinite value because of a connection to the divine.³⁸³ For Aulén, this one-sided emphasis on the human side, even though divine value is attached, compromises the theocentricity of atonement and departs from Luther's fundamental intention.

Expounding the dramatic atonement view in the published Christus Victor, Gustaf Aulén notes Luther's enumeration of the enemies from which Christ delivers mankind: sin, death, the devil, the law and God's wrath. Aulén indicates that Luther adds the law and the wrath of God to the "regular trio" of the Fathers.³⁸⁴ In Christus Victor Aulén explains that these opponents or "tyrants" are interrelated as a "whole series of evil powers."³⁸⁵ Aulén's meaning can be understood in seeing these opponents as forming an interconnected conglomerate of evil.

It is important to recognize, however, that Aulén, following Luther, envisions a certain aspect by which these tyrants also serve God's purpose. There is a duality, a dual aspect present here. Luther exemplifies this when in his Hebrews commentary he speaks of death not only as a

force to be feared but also as "putting an end to sin."³⁸⁶ The same dual aspect applies to the question of the law. Discussing Galatians 2:19, Luther projects a double use of the law: a civic use which restrains transgressions, and a theological use which multiplies the sense of transgression.³⁸⁷ In both of these uses, the law, according to Luther's interpretation of Galatians 2:17, functions as a "ministry of sin, wrath, death, and damnation," since it makes requirements and then condemns.³⁸⁸ On the other side of the duality, in speaking of Galatians 3:19, Luther can exalt the law's function as serving God's will by being a preparation for grace and impelling a person to the promise of grace in the Gospel.³⁸⁹ In this sense, Luther declares that this is "the best and most perfect use of the law."³⁹⁰ For Luther, God's wrath stands as God's direct opposition to all that is evil; it is, as Luther indicates speaking of Galatians 3:13, "the curse" which conflicts with "the blessing."³⁹¹

Throughout the *Christus Victor* atonement exposition, Aulén acknowledges the dual aspect by which these opponents also serve God's purpose. A very distinct analysis is found in The Faith of the Christian Church. Aulén recognizes these as "on the one hand, tyrannical powers which enslave humanity, and on the other hand, the instruments of divine judgment."³⁹² As he writes, Aulén differentiates various degrees of the opponents' function as instruments of the divine will. In his Christus Victor book, while Aulén

speaks of the law and God's wrath as "standing in a closer relation to God's will than the others,"³⁹³ he, nonetheless, does not give as clear a consideration as that found in The Faith of the Christian Church.

In The Faith of the Christian Church, Aulén, basing himself on Luther, delineates the following ideas concerning the law:

- a) "while death and the devil can be used only indirectly as instruments of the divine will, the law is very closely connected with this will";
- b) "the demand of the divine will expressed in the law becomes at the same time a destructive power";
- c) "'victory over the law' means that divine love in Christ breaks through the legal order of justice and establishes a new order in the relationship between God and man."³⁹⁴

Relating to God's wrath, Aulén enunciates the following:

- a) "here the question is not simply about an instrument of the divine will, but an essential element in this will";
- b) "'wrath' is God's direct and immediate reaction to sin...according to Luther, a destructive power and a tyrant, even the worst of all tyrants";

- c) "when wrath is separated from love it assumes this [destructive] character";
- d) "the overcoming of wrath...occurs when Christ submits to wrath and bears the burden it imposes...through the self-giving sacrifice of love";
- e) "divine wrath is thus 'reconciled'; it is, so to speak, fused with love";
- f) "the act of reconciliation appears with crystal clarity as the victory of divine love itself";
- g) "it is not dissolved and rendered superficial as in the Latin theory of atonement."³⁹⁵

For Aulén's understanding of reconciliation, he contends that "when the divine love bears the burden of divine wrath, the wrath is transformed into and fused with love."³⁹⁶

Reviewing Luther's thinking on sin, Aulén claims that the situation is quite different. There remains only one possible outcome for sin in the matter of atonement; it must be overcome by the divine power. Aulén states, "This hostile power cannot serve the divine will except in so far as the divine will overcomes it and turns it into good."³⁹⁷

Concerning sin as a force to be reckoned with, Luther shows himself aware of the tremendous power of evil and of the fact that only a stronger power can overcome this force of bondage: "Sin is a very cruel and powerful tyrant over

all men throughout the world, a tyrant who cannot be overthrown and expelled by the power of any creatures, whether angels or men, but only by the infinite and sovereign power of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was given for it."³⁹⁸ In this same commentary on Galatians 1:4, Luther argues that no human satisfaction can suffice for the gravity of sin and that only a greater power is able to conquer it. His words appear to echo Anselm's thinking but do not present Anselm's manner of handling atonement:

In addition, it follows that our sins are so great, so infinite and invincible, that the whole world could not make satisfaction for even one of them. Certainly the greatness of the ransom - namely, the blood of the Son of God - makes it sufficiently clear that we can neither make satisfaction for our sin nor prevail over it....But we should note here the infinite greatness of the price paid for it. Then it will be evident that its power is so great that it could not be removed by any means except that the Son of God be given for it.³⁹⁹

Luther, like Anselm, underlines the greatness of sin; then he extols the complete theocentricity of the divine atonement: "For if our sins can be removed by our own satisfactions, why did the Son of God have to be given for them? But since he was given for them, it follows that we cannot remove them by works of our own."⁴⁰⁰ Aulén's constant point of contention with the Anselmic Latin type of atonement centers on the all-important question of this theocentricity; for Aulén the satisfaction-merit scheme compromises this divine-centeredness and therefore cannot be identified with Luther and his intentions.

In the dramatic atonement presentation, Aulén reiterates the integral connection Luther posits between sin and the devil: "His [Luther's] idea of the devil is not a mere piece of mythology, but...he is thinking rather of a power of evil really existing in the world of men, and of the devil as a sort of embodiment of this evil power."⁴⁰¹ The notion of the devil's deception conveys God's victory over the devil and the realm of evil. How does Luther develop his thinking concerning this evil power?

Luther's concept of the devil can be summarized in these points:

- a) the devil is an image of opposition; he stands against life, faith, and truth;
- b) the devil himself is a figure of deception;
- c) the devil's reign involves sin and death; God's kingdom opposes him radically as expressed in God's wrath and in the restraint of the law.⁴⁰²

In the Preface to the Galatians Commentary (1535), Luther describes the devil as a "liar and murderer" whose "only concern is the one that is always characteristic of him, namely, to persecute our Christ...."⁴⁰³ The battle lines are drawn decisively as the devil and Christ engage in a fight to the death. Luther also sees here the vindication of his idea of salvation by grace alone while the devil represents the evil of self-righteousness:

And yet Satan, that is, the insane idea of self-righteousness, made such headway among them

that they killed all the prophets and finally even their promised Messiah, the very Son of God himself, and all for the same reason, namely, because they all taught that men are pleasing to God by the grace of God, not by our own righteousness.⁴⁰⁴

The Preface to the Galatians Commentary (1535) fixes attention on justification by grace in opposition to all the evil and self-righteousness personified by the devil.⁴⁰⁵ Throughout his presentation, Luther employs the method of "paradoxical inversion" whereby the devil who is the deceiver is duped and overcome by Christ. Aulén's Christus Victor idea, following closely Luther's graphic description of the mirabile duellum, points to I John 3:18: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil."⁴⁰⁶

In attempting to understand Aulén's Christus Victor proposal, an analysis of Luther's discussion of Galatians 3:13 in the Galatians Commentary (1535) provides many valuable insights. Luther's words reveal the major principles of his soteriology and relate directly to Aulén's own viewpoint.⁴⁰⁷ Luther insists that Christ suffers "for us" and takes upon himself the sins of all.⁴⁰⁸ In Galatians 3:13, Luther speaks descriptively of Christ becoming the "thief, murderer, adulterer, robber, desecrator, blasphemer, etc."⁴⁰⁹ Christ stands in a sense of solidarity with sinful mankind, and he does this freely and out of love; the will of the Father receives Christ's obedience and identification with sinners:

Christ was not only found among sinners; but of his own free will and by the will of the Father

he wanted to be an associate of sinners, having assumed the flesh and blood of those who were immersed in all sorts of sin.⁴¹⁰

This affirmation of the Son's obedient and free acceptance of the Father's will and his solidarity with sinners receives ample consideration in Aulén's The Drama and the Symbols. Aulén characterizes this fact as "the secret of love that offers itself in the battle against evil."⁴¹¹ Aulén declares:

The sacrifice of Jesus, as a human action, is determined by obedience to God and by solidarity with man....All this is full of deep meaning, and reveals the secret of love that offers itself for others in the battle against evil....⁴¹²

Throughout the Galatians exposition, Luther repeats a solid refrain extolling the divine love as the cause of our salvation: "Therefore Christ not only was crucified and died, but by divine love sin was laid upon him."⁴¹³ Aulén's thoughts concur with Luther's idea: "Divine love active in Christ is that love which seeks sinful man and enters into communion with him."⁴¹⁴

In an extended discussion in The Faith of the Christian Church,⁴¹⁵ basing his concepts on Luther's ideas, Aulén treats of the divine love engaged in a decisive struggle against evil to free mankind and to reconcile God and the sinner. Aulén describes this redemptive love as spontaneous, unmotivated, and self-giving.⁴¹⁶ In this context, Aulén specifically connects these concepts with Luther's distinction of God's "opus alienum" and "opus

proprium"; for Luther, the Gospel is the "opus proprium" of God's saving love:

In the same way the great evangelicals in Christianity have been able to proclaim in a fresh and living way that God is love. "The law," says Luther, is God's "alien work" (opus alienum), "the gospel" is his "proper work" (opus proprium). Even though Luther spoke emphatically and realistically about the "wrath" of God, love was nevertheless to him the very "nature" of God.⁴¹⁷

Developing this consideration, Aulén posits three theological assertions which relate directly to his soteriology: 1) "the inmost character of the conception of God is love"; 2) "every affirmation about God becomes an affirmation about his love"; 3) "nothing can be said about God, his power, his opposition to evil, or anything else, which is not in the last analysis a statement about his love."⁴¹⁸ For Aulén's Christus Victor idea, this love retains all its divine strength in the struggle against evil. Aulén pointedly discusses Luther's idea of wrath to demonstrate the way in which God's love conquers:

Wrath, says Luther, is God's opus alienum, love is his opus proprium. Wrath is the mask behind which God hides himself, the means he uses to attain his purpose. Without this connection with wrath, love would no longer be love, it would lose its purity. Love shines behind the dark cloud of wrath; yea, even more, it is active even in wrath.⁴¹⁹

Going on further, Aulén delineates Luther's view concerning why wrath and love must stand in radical opposition to one another:

Luther speaks of die zornige Liebe ("the angry love"), and declares that it does not destroy anything, as hate and envy do, but simply wants to separate the evil from the good, in order that love and the good may remain. It is not only

wrath which is defined and purified by its dependence upon love, but love itself is affected by its relation to wrath. When wrath is, as it were, merged with love, every possibility of enfeebling its meaning is removed; love remains strong and firm, and retains its purity under all circumstances.⁴²⁰

Aulén contends that such an opposition is "radical and unconditional," stating that "no opposition to evil can be more decisive and critical than the opposition of love."⁴²¹ In this sense, Aulén expands Luther's concept of the divine love as occupying the very center of man's salvation.

Luther's description of Christ's salvific action as a momentous struggle against the forces of bondage reaches a highpoint in his comments on Galatians 3:13. Depicting Christ as the one who takes upon himself Peter's denial, Paul's blasphemy, David's adultery, and Adam's disobedience, Luther avows that the law "attacks him and kills him."⁴²² The battle lines converge even more dramatically as sin also assaults Jesus in this duel:

Not only my sins and yours, but the sins of the entire world, past, present, and future, attack him, try to damn him, and do in fact damn him. But because in the same Person, who is the highest, the greatest, and the only sinner, there is also eternal and invincible righteousness, therefore these two converge: the highest, the greatest, and the only sin; and the highest, the greatest, and the only righteousness. Here one of them must yield and be conquered.⁴²³

And as Luther intensifies this sketch, he speaks of death opposing Christ who is life: "Thus also death, which is the almighty empress of the entire world, killing kings, princes, and all men in general, clashes against life with full force and is about to conquer it and swallow it."⁴²⁴

As the law, sin, and death attack Christ, one can see Luther's exposition come to a climax when he describes the divine wrath, the curse, contending with the blessing:

Thus the curse, which is the divine wrath against the whole world, has the same conflict with the blessing, that is, with the eternal grace and mercy of God in Christ. Therefore the curse clashes with the blessing and wants to damn it and annihilate it. But it cannot.⁴²⁵

Drawing such a dramatic and graphic picture of the violent confrontation of Christ and the powers of bondage which tyrannize mankind, Luther unhesitatingly affirms that the final victory in this battle belongs to Christ; God cannot be defeated:

For if the blessing in Christ could be conquered, then God himself would be conquered. But this is impossible. Therefore, Christ, who is the divine power, righteousness, blessing, grace, and life conquers and destroys these monsters - sin, death, and the curse - without weapons or battle, in his own body and in himself, as Paul enjoys saying (Col. 2:15): "He disarmed the principalities and powers, triumphing over them in him."⁴²⁶

Luther asserts that this victory is achieved in the person of Christ as divine and as human ("in his own body and in himself"), and that mankind shares this victory by faith in Christ.⁴²⁷

Emphasizing that redemption is accomplished through the person of Christ, truly divine and human, Luther in Galatians 3:13 underscores the divine power involved in conquering the forces of bondage. He affirms unequivocally that "this is the work, not of any creature but of the divine power."⁴²⁸ Luther proposes that only a higher, divine power is capable of such a victory:

For in opposition to this mighty power - sin, death, and the curse - which of itself reigns in the whole world and in the entire creation, it is necessary to set an even higher power, which cannot be found and does not exist apart from the divine power. Therefore to abolish sin, to destroy death, to remove the curse in himself, to grant righteousness, to bring life to light (2 Tim. 1:10), and to bring the blessing in himself, that is, to annihilate these things and to create those ⁴²⁹all these are works solely of the divine power.

In Christus Victor Aulén quotes Luther's statement and comments that "these words might be taken as a text on which to hang an exposition of the whole essence of Lutheran theology."⁴³⁰ Foremost in Aulén's mind is the theocentricity of salvation manifested in Luther's position.

Analyzing Galatians 3:13, Luther demonstrates the integral coherence and unity between his idea of justification and Christ's divine victory. The passage is noteworthy:

As I often warn, therefore, the doctrine of justification must be learned diligently. For in it are included all the other doctrines of our faith; and if it is sound, all the others are sound as well. Therefore when we teach that men are justified through Christ and that Christ is the Victor over sin, death, and the eternal curse, we are testifying at the same time that he is God by nature.⁴³¹

Here one can discern clearly Luther's thoughts concerning justification, Christ's victory, and the necessity of the divine nature to achieve such a triumph. In this particular passage, three essential Christian doctrines are joined together: Justification, the Redemptive Victory, and the Divinity of Christ. Luther, anxious to deny the validity of a righteousness through human merits, returns again to what

amounts to a constant refrain: "For it belongs exclusively to the divine power to destroy sin and abolish death, to create righteousness and grant life."⁴³²

Luther explains the importance of faith in this context: "We are justified by faith alone, because faith alone grasps this victory of Christ."⁴³³ To this Luther adds that whatever is lacking lies not in the fact of Christ's victory but rather in mankind's failure to believe.⁴³⁴ Along these lines of belief, Luther makes the point that while the remnants of sin do remain even in the blessed where "sin has in fact been abolished, put to death, and buried," God does not hold these against mankind on account of faith.⁴³⁵ They are overlooked and not "imputed" against the redeemed.⁴³⁶ Even in such terminology, Luther's main assertion emerges: the victory is achieved by divine power; and it is shared through faith in Christ.

Luther's discussion of Galatians 3:13 abounds with the notion of Christ's divine power being the source of triumph - the curse has been overcome by him who has identified himself with sinners. The victory, as Luther clearly observes in Galatians, belongs to the Son of God:

And being joined with us who were accursed, he became a curse for us; and he concealed his blessing in our sin, death, and curse, which condemned and killed him. But because he was the Son of God, he could not be held by them.⁴³⁷ He conquered them and triumphed over them.

One of the problems inherent in an analysis of Luther's thoughts on salvation concerns Luther's free usage by which several apparently different soteriological

patterns appear in a given place. This mixture of motifs is evidenced in the Kirchenpostille Sermons for the Christmas season completed by Luther during the Wartburg Exile (1521, 1522). This terminological mixture witnesses to the scope of Luther's thinking and his free use of the traditional patterns he inherited. Aulén himself understands Luther's manner without prejudice to a central theme of theocentricity and divine victory.⁴³⁸

A typical passage in the Kirchenpostille is the interpretation of Matthew 2:11 in which Luther speaks of the cost of mankind's salvation. In this setting one can detect a terminology akin to the Latin type of atonement:

For it was not possible to overcome God's wrath, judgment, conscience, hell, death, and all evil things, and indeed to gain all benefits, unless God's righteousness received satisfaction, sin was given its due reward, and death was overcome by justice. Accordingly, St. Paul generally refers to the suffering and blood of Christ when he proclaims the grace of God in him, in order to indicate that all the benefits that are given to us through Christ, are granted only because of his ineffable merit and the price he paid.⁴³⁹

In a similar vein, Luther's sermon for the gospel of New Year's Day bears a striking resemblance to other soteriological presentations:

For when death overcame him and slew him...and he willingly and innocently permitted himself to be slain, death became indebted to him, having done him wrong and having sinned against him and having handled all things inattentively, so that Christ has an honest claim against it. The wrong which death perpetrated against him, is so great that death is unable to pay or to atone for it. And so death must be under Christ and in his power forever. Thus death is overcome in Christ and strangled. But since Christ did this not for himself, but for us, and since he has made us a

present of this overcoming of death in baptism, consequently all believers in Christ must be masters over death; death must be their subject, indeed, their criminal, whom they must judge and execute, exactly as they do when they die and on the Last Day. Through the gift of Christ death has become guilty against all to whom Christ has presented this gift.⁴⁴⁰

In these places, Luther uses the theological tradition of his time. Aulén insists, however, that such usage does not invalidate his claim that Luther's varied expressions point finally to a central theme of God's victory. These theological presentations must be evaluated in light of Luther's purpose and his unswerving adherence to the theocentricity of mankind's redemption. In this sense, Aulén always returns to an essential affirmation of Christus Victor - Luther's dramatic view of Christ's work "stands in organic relation with his theological outlook as a whole."⁴⁴¹ Whatever else Luther may assert concerning the redemptive role of Christ, for Gustaf Aulén, Luther's Christ stands out clearly as the one who triumphs over all the forces of bondage. To be saved by grace means to experience the power of Christus Victor; this is the theology of Martin Luther which Gustaf Aulén strives to uphold.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Conclusions

Michael Slusser has commented: "Theological thinking about soteriology has not been the same since Gustaf Aulén's Christus Victor, which called attention to what Aulén named the "classic" or "dramatic" idea of the atonement....Though Aulén has been criticized on various points, his book remains useful and widely used."¹ Slusser's observation reveals the important place occupied by Aulén's Christological proposal; this present study has sought to analyze in closer detail how Aulén's Christus Victor came to be. Aulén himself recognized two key characteristics of the Olaus Petri lectures: they were "too short and too sharp," overstressing his case; in addition, the author intended them primarily to stimulate discussion along the lines of his soteriological hypothesis.² On various occasions after the Olaus Petri lectures of 1930, Aulén expressed delight and unfeigned surprise that his book had received such wide attention. To that extent, he had succeeded remarkably. These two qualities mentioned by Aulén have formed part of the backdrop of this dissertation. Acknowledging Aulén's "sharpness" in his exposition, we have attempted, nonetheless, to analyze more carefully his thoughts with the hope of continuing the author's intention of extending the soteriological investigation. Since Aulén's consideration of Irenaeus, Anselm and Luther is brief in Christus Victor, this dissertation has provided a more detailed look at the

prime sources for Aulén's presentation. Similarly, we have studied Aulén's relationship to Swedish theology and his use of the Christus Victor theme throughout many of his writings.

Another background feature of this thesis concerns the significance of soteriology for all of Christian theology.

Dietrich Wiederkkehr stresses its importance:

"...soteriology has proved to be a continuous transcendental dimension and realignment of theology not limited to any particular field. Sooner or later soteriology affects the doctrine of God in his relation to creation and history."³

Wiederkkehr's comments prove interesting not just for the affirmation of soteriology's importance but also as his thought relates to what occurred in Gustaf Aulén's theological production.

Beginning his professional career, Aulén's endeavors reflected interest in ecclesiological and historical questions; he then moved on to probing the image of God; finally the saving work of Christ became the apex of his theological pursuits. As time progressed, despite various interests, the Christus Victor theme functioned substantially in his theology. Aulén himself acknowledged that the Christus Victor theme was "always present in my theology" - "Yes, I have never left this theme [after Christus Victor]."⁴ Aulén's affirmation has shaped the nucleus of Chapter Three in this dissertation: the presence of the Christus Victor theme throughout Aulén's theology.

In order to understand more fully Aulén's soteriological proposition, one needs to look in two directions - at Christus Victor itself, but also at Aulén's other theological works. Using this method, the Christus Victor idea does not remain isolated from the rest of Aulén's theology.⁵ As Aulén became aware of defects in his presentation, he responded to them, not by revising the Christus Victor book, but often by taking up these critical points in subsequent writings. The Christus Victor proposal, centered in the Olaus Petri lectures of 1930, functioned as an integrally essential theme for the rest of Aulén's theology. Chapter Three of this thesis underscores this fundamental fact.

It is interesting to note how the various criticisms directed at Aulén's initial exposition influenced Aulén's theological enterprise. Of course, Aulén's theology was more than just a reaction to these objections; his writings demonstrated his personal development as well as his keen sensitivity to the theological advances all around him. By tracing his major publications after Christus Victor (Chapter Three), one recognizes clearly this progression in Aulén's professional career.

While it may be somewhat artificial, we find it useful to schematize the types of criticism directed against Aulén in the various decades and to recognize how he addressed them.

Critical areas:

1930's-1940's humanity/divinity questions	late 1940's-1950's creation problem	1960's a personal Jesus?	late 1960's faith's opening to the world
---	---	-----------------------------------	--

These objections to Aulén's theology were not only voiced by specific authors, but arose from the general trends of these various decades. In this dissertation, Chapter Three explains how in each of these decades Aulén responded. Among Aulén's writings, we have highlighted the special significance of The Drama and the Symbols as the renewal of Christus Victor and Das christliche Gottesbild. To read and understand The Drama and the Symbols is to capture the essence of Aulén's theology.

Chapter One of this thesis situates Aulén within Swedish theology and the Lundensian group. Our main concern is to show how Aulén provided a major impetus to this theological movement, and also to indicate that he was not stringently impeded by its specific methodology. Aulén's approach, especially in his dogmatic presentation, The Faith of the Christian Church, cannot be appreciated without knowledge of the Lundensian movement. Yet, one sees in Gustaf Aulén a flexibility in adaptation and progression which is not so readily the case with his colleagues. Aulén's comment that he prefers to use "motif" more in the sense of a "musical motif" rather than as a strict methodological tool gives clear indication of his independence.⁶

In this width and breadth of approach, one cannot help but feel that Aulén's mentor Nathan Söderblom has imparted to him more than just theology. In almost all instances, Söderblom and Billing are mentioned in passing as formative influences upon Aulén. Chapter Two of this thesis has demonstrated not only the basic theological and historical connections but also has surveyed specific points of convergence. While Aulén did not retain Billing's firm foundation in the Old Testament, nonetheless, Einar Billing's principal themes emerged plainly in Aulén's atonement drama. This thesis has intended to specify more accurately the dualistic-dramatic perspectives of Söderblom and Billing in relation to Aulén's soteriology.

Aulén's Christus Victor proposal identified Irenaeus as a key Patristic source for Aulén's contention of a classic atonement idea. Relying on interpretations such as that of Gustaf Wingren, Chapter Four of the thesis has shown that Irenaeus' soteriology is not simply Incarnational, nor restorative, but includes a decisive conflict-victory theme. With a deeper analysis of Irenaeus, Aulén's argument is not weakened but strengthened.

Aulén's mentality in the 1920's and 1930's led him to an intense dissatisfaction with the sterility of Lutheran Orthodoxy. His major assault on Anselm's satisfaction scheme was decisively influenced by his disaffection with this type of theology. Later in his career, Aulén softened his critique of Anselm's intention, but always retained his

chief point of disagreement - the very rational structure.⁷ By following the particular details of Anselm's satisfaction plan in Cur Deus Homo, Chapter Five has displayed the confines of this approach and its vulnerability. George C. Foley's negative appraisal in The Bohlen Lectures supports Aulén's contention of the inadequacy of the satisfaction scheme. While critics focus attention on Aulén's qua homo-qua Deus distinction, they fail to recognize Aulén's concern for what Anselm's theory did to the image of God. Although salvation in Anselm's system appeared theocentric, Chapter Five indicates that this theocentricity was qualified.

One expects Aulén to praise Luther's contribution. A positive effect of Aulén's accomplishment has been to highlight the often-neglected soteriological dimension of Luther's theology. Chapter Six of this dissertation has reviewed the Swedish Luther interpretation with the intention of sustaining Aulén's contention concerning Luther's use of the dramatic atonement view. Whether by design or not, Aulén acknowledged the complexity in Luther's thought and then used him in support of his own proposal. Chapter Six has explored Luther's theology from the dramatic viewpoint in defense of Aulén; yet, the question is certainly not a closed one.

In sum, the analysis presented in this dissertation has sought to investigate more closely Aulén's bold assertion and to expand the debate in searching for greater

understanding of the atonement. At the same time, a number of problematic issues, which we have seen, surfaced in Aulén's theology. We can reiterate them in this conclusion.

First of all, Aulén's method of presentation poses a problem. George Rupp pointedly questions Aulén's typology even though he admits that "it [Aulén's typology] has become one of the most frequently cited theological typologies ever developed."⁸ Rupp contends that Aulén constructs his typology and then "indulging in highly dubious interpretations of the historical data" and offering only partial descriptions, Aulén fits his historical consideration into such a framework.⁹ Rupp evaluates Aulén's manner as careless and "cavalier."¹⁰ In a similar fashion, Thor Hall accuses Aulén of oversimplifying his analyses and of being "vulnerable to linguistic confusion."¹¹ Likewise, George Evenson specifically cites the Christus Victor book as "abounding in sweeping, bold assertions without adequate proof."¹² Evenson indicates that "it is possible to emphasize one aspect of the truth to the point of distorting the truth. This is the basic fault of Christus Victor."¹³

What these critics fail to see is that Aulén's approach is not illegitimate. Aulén seeks to identify general trends in various periods; the comprehension of such a broad picture thus enables the observer to understand the basic direction of human action and meaning. Scientific discovery takes place precisely within this general sweep of

things. If, at any particular point, a position or interpretation is overstressed, this fact does not of itself vitiate the whole process of understanding. An example might be given in comprehending the basic "personalism" which affects the social relationships of people in our own time. A particular legalistic or juridical action does not invalidate the common underlying personalist trend. Hence, while Aulén's use of Billing's längdsnitt and tvärrsnitt presents some problems, and although Aulén may not be as exact as one would wish, nonetheless, his employment of such typology is valid. Even though this dissertation admits Aulén's defects in this regard, it supports his typological approach as a legitimate vehicle for theological comprehension.

As far as Aulén's exposition is concerned, a more pressing criticism concerns Aulén's neglect of a sufficient "whole biblical" perspective. He fails to utilize adequately the Old Testament foundation so evident in his mentors, Söderblom and Billing. Kenneth Dale contends that "Aulén's Christus Victor theory is a wrong interpretation of the Bible as a whole."¹⁴ Dale faults Aulén and Nygren for emphasizing the new age in Christ to such proportions that the Old Covenant appears too much as "an age of dark death, ruled over by Satan, the wrath of God and stern, cold law."¹⁵ Although one needs to keep in mind that the Christus Victor lectures are not in themselves a scriptural presentation, nevertheless, Dale's objection is appropriate.

Dale's opinion may be somewhat extreme, but it is worth noting as an impression gained from Aulén's lack of Old Testament appreciation:

...Aulén believes God has actually changed his purpose and mode of acting. Carrying his conception to its logical end, we have a capricious God who once dealt sternly in terms of law, but who reversed himself at the time of Christ and dealt from then on in terms of love.¹⁶

Even though a significant portion of Aulén's theology is directed toward the image of God problem, he himself appears deficient in distinctly bridging both the Testaments. Aulén's God-picture may also fall prey to another criticism. While Aulén is unafraid to discuss the various tensions in the God-image, as he does throughout his writings, one gets the impression that he so stresses the God of love and victory that the darker side, the more painful aspect of God's dealings with his Son and with mankind is smoothed over. Although Aulén is critical of the God-images of Anselm and of Lutheran Orthodoxy, upon closer analysis, he too evidences a picture of God that is incomplete in spite of all the protestations to the contrary. Even if the absolute theocentricity of redemption and the essence of divine victory are preserved, nevertheless, Aulén's God loses some of the paradox and mysterious sense of a God who delivers up his Son. Aulén seems unwilling to probe the potentially more difficult side of the divine redemptive activity. Somehow the deepest meaning of the Gethsemane episode and of such statements as Romans 3:25 does not come through sufficiently. As Aulén

strives to clarify the image of God, he quite naturally highlights some of the qualities most favorable to his own predisposition; Aulén's God becomes somewhat predictable in spite of Aulén's recognition of the paradoxes involved.

Throughout appraisals of Aulén's endeavors, one notices the frequent accusation that he misses the First Article of the Creed; the God of creation becomes rather obscured. Norman Hjelm's study and Gert Nilsson's book both criticize this deficiency. Having recognized this lack in his theologizing, Aulén made major strides in correcting the situation. His efforts are particularly evident in Church, Law and Society in which the events of the war brought him to a deeper need for establishing a common base for human responsibility. Likewise, one cannot undervalue Aulén's regard for Gustaf Wingren's criticisms and suggestions. The Irenaeus section of this dissertation has described this connection. Progressively, Aulén became more conscious of the necessity for integrating the aspect of creation into his Christology. The Drama and the Symbols testifies to this development in striking terms.

One strongly suspects that Aulén's creation problem as well as the human-divine nature/function problem may well have been avoided, had he given greater scope to a consideration of the Trinitarian dimension. Relating to the salvific drama, the intimate connection of Father, Son, and Spirit is not explored in any depth. Here Aulén remains content to assert the individual functions of the divine

persons without examining the inner principles of unity and relationship. A more extensive investigation of the relationships within the Trinity would have avoided some of the problematics inherent in the qua Deus-qua homo approach to the atonement.

Along this same line of thought, Aulén does not make a major issue out of delineating certain specific terms: salvation, redemption, atonement. For his dramatic atonement view, all these terms, while representing different aspects or degrees of the divine action, come to a central unity in the victory of divine agape over all bondage. In the divine triumph, man is reconciled, he is saved from external and internal oppression, and the relationship of God with fallen mankind is made right. The divine victory subsumes all these aspects. While Aulén is open to criticism on this point, he, nonetheless, acknowledges the potential use of the various distinctions without changing his principal affirmation.

This failure to distinguish more substantially the variety of the soteriological expressions found in the New Testament has been criticized.¹⁷ Aulén, of course, does not deny the rationale for the different New Testament perspectives; however, he so strongly emphasizes atonement through victory that the importance of these other avenues of interpretation diminishes. At the same time, he firmly rejects any view that conflicts with a major theological

principle: salvation belongs to God alone; it must be absolutely theocentric.

In the course of this thesis, we have mentioned Aulén's problem concerning the relationship between history and faith. Per Erik Persson's The Unique Character of Christian Faith. The Relation Between History and Faith as a Problem in the Theology of Gustaf Aulén (1979) charts Aulén's shift toward a more distinct appreciation for history in man's relationship with God. His earlier distrust of history stemmed in part from the anti-Ritschlian attitude of the Lundensians. On the other hand, one notices an ambivalence in this question. While history is kept separated from the faith dimension, nevertheless, history also provides the vehicle for the investigation of Christian belief. As we have noted in Chapters One and Three, Aulén gradually became aware of the more direct role for history related to faith as a result of both his own progression and the development in the theological world around him. The threat to the evangelical sense of faith experienced in Aulén's early theological career was no longer present. Chapter Three of this study has pointed out that by the time of Aulén's later works the former problem of history-faith had receded. In this dissertation we have observed Aulén's theological flexibility in not fearing adjustment and change. The question of Aulén's shift toward the historical dimension's role demonstrates that Aulén's theology was always moving and adapting.

Most Swedish commentators on Aulén chart Aulén's development by comparing the various editions of The Faith of the Christian Church. Here one can see how he rearranges his priorities and alters previous emphases. Later, he even authored a completely new book, Kristen gudstro i förändringens värld, rather than revise the previous dogmatic text again. However, the Christus Victor publication, in spite of noticeable defects and various criticisms, was not revised. As we have indicated throughout this thesis, Aulén strongly defended the bold assertion at the heart of his Olaus Petri lectures. If one wishes to see the areas of correction or revision, then one must inspect the works Aulén published subsequent to 1930. Indeed, there are interpretations and shifts directed at the original presentation. Aulén's statement that the Christus Victor theme never left him provides the rationale for exploring his struggle-victory idea in other publications as we have done in Chapter Three.

Aware of Aulén's difficulties in regard to creation and history, Göran Bexell examines another area posing a recurring problem for Aulén's theology - the general question of the relationship between the Christian dimension and the human one.¹⁸ Aulén's writings in the first issues of the Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift in which he questioned idealism, humanism, and the overly psychological approach to faith manifest this strain between the Christian and the human.¹⁹ Of course, this problem also relates to Aulén's

questions of humanity's place in atonement. However, one recognizes that as Aulén integrated creation more coherently into his theology, along with his deeper appreciation for the historical dimension, this kristet-humant gap began to narrow.²⁰ We have mentioned that for his Christology, Aulén's later books, such as Jesus in Contemporary Historical Research and Kristen gudstro i förändringens värld, reveal Aulén's increasing regard for history and the human dimension. Still, the objection concerning Aulén's devaluation of the human side of things, especially in his earlier works, cannot be overlooked.

Reviewing Aulén's Christology one perceives another noteworthy deficiency - the lack of emphasis on the resurrection as integral to Christ's definitive victory. Aulén does indeed speak of the resurrection, but one would expect him to highlight the point as a unique sign of the divine triumph. Kenneth Dale analyzes the neglect of the resurrection as "a conspicuous inadequacy" in Aulén's thought.²¹ In a study of Aulén's theology of the cross and resurrection, Christopher Meakin claims that even though both points function essentially in Aulén's thinking, it is the cross that plays the essential role in atonement.²² Aulén himself connects the resurrection to the victory in this fashion:

The resurrection is the primary testimony to the exaltation. It reveals the victory won through his obedience unto death....His work does not first become a victory through the exaltation, but the exaltation unveils, reveals, and realizes the victorious act contained in his finished work.²³

such an interpretation accentuates the revelatory, illuminative part of the resurrection: "In the light of the resurrection it [the cross] is the sign of victory."²⁴ For Aulén's thinking, the victory is accomplished on the cross; the resurrection is specifically connected to it in so far as it is a sign of exaltation and the beginning of the continuity of Christ's action in the Church.²⁵ Aulén does in fact treat of the resurrection but, in spite of his assurances of the two-fold unity, the resurrection remains outside the core of the victory. This appears especially so in Aulén's earlier productions.

Aulén's view of the resurrection is not surprising, since his methodology rejected the metaphysical and historicizing tendencies within which the resurrection served apologetically to substantiate the claims of Christ's divinity. Hence, the idea of locating the triumph and exaltation in the cross of Jesus, as John's Gospel does, provided a means of asserting the fundamental truth of salvation apart from the theological problems connected with the resurrection. Since Aulén disdained all apologetics, it is not unusual to see him concentrate on the cross. Yet, the entire situation proves somewhat perplexing. We cannot affirm that primarily the cross is the center of his thought since Aulén makes no primary/secondary categorizations. Up until the 1950's-1960's, his position on the resurrection was valid but elusive. One notices that as Aulén's appreciation for history and the human dimension developed

in his later works, the resurrection appeared less separated from the cross and more functionally integrated within the heart of the divine struggle. One needs to qualify Dale's objection in this fashion: "Aulén does not neglect the resurrection; he is ambivalent in his consideration of it."

Discussing these gaps in Aulén's soteriology, we finally uncover what may prove his major deficiency: the vagueness of the victory. Aulén's examination of the classic, dramatic view of atonement asserts its superiority over the other presentations. Yet, Fisher Humphreys proposes a serious objection:

...as an explanation of atonement it [Aulén's view] fails for the simple reason that it is not intelligible. This is true partly because of the paradoxes it contains, but, more than that, it is not intelligible because we cannot understand what it means to say that Christ destroyed evil forces. How does one destroy evil forces?²⁶

Geoffrey Graystone displays a similar negative judgment:

"Very little indication is given as to just how victory is achieved, or how salvation is linked up with it...."²⁷ Even though Aulén's victory concept concurs with the deepest sentiments of Christian faith, the "how" of the victory remains a serious question.

Kenneth Dale relates this vagueness to the problem of the manner in which Aulén depicts the conquest of sin. He accuses Aulén of too much concern about the tyrants external to man,²⁸ with the result that the "Christus Victor motif has failed to give a satisfactory picture of the overcoming of sin itself."²⁹ He criticizes Aulén for failing to

appreciate the subjective side of sin as a conscious, personal rebellion of the will; and by neglecting the subjective side of sin, Aulén has weakened his whole idea of victory.³⁰ Dale concludes that "although the problem of sin is supposedly provided for by the conquest, it is obvious that sin is really dealt with in a different manner, namely, through forgiveness."³¹ This writer concludes that in Aulén's dramatic atonement view, the plane of activity emerges as cosmic rather than personal.³² While Dale's objection may be overdrawn, it does point out the problem of vagueness in Aulén's victory, especially concerning the victory over sin.

Allied with this vagueness in the victory presentation, one can mention also that Aulén's Jesus figure often seems to merely react to the external opposition without possessing the assurance of divine power. Although Aulén attempts to retain a balanced view of Jesus' humanity and divinity, nonetheless, a detailed use of the portrayal of Jesus in John's Gospel, especially as conscious of his own power and destiny (John 10:18; 19:11), would have reinforced Aulén's victory theme. In a similar vein, the picturesque images of the "harrowing of hell" and the religious meaning behind these primitive yet pervasive ideas do not feature prominently in Aulén's consideration.

In our conclusion, we have enumerated a number of apparent deficiencies in Aulén's soteriological presentation. Some of them run deeper than others. In

almost all these instances, Aulén projects some sort of corrective emphasis; nonetheless, these points underline possible avenues of improvement for Aulén's proposal. It might be well to list in summary fashion these "problem" areas: a) presentation-method; b) Old Testament perspectives; c) God-image; d) creation; e) Trinity; f) New Testament terminology; g) history-faith; h) Christian-human dimensions; i) resurrection; j) the vagueness of the victory.

Having surveyed some of Aulén's defects, let us sum up his achievement. At the beginning of this thesis, we proposed to demonstrate that Aulén's victory notion is not limited to the Christus Victor book of 1930 but forms a coherent, essential theme and hermeneutic for his later theology. Chapter Three sought to establish this affirmation. We intended likewise to show how Aulén's theological contributions were linked to his peers and his predecessors. Chapters One and Two explored this question in detail. Aulén's initial presentation in Christus Victor, as well as its later development, spoke of Irenaeus, Anselm and Luther. Chapter Four proposed that Aulén's contention of a struggle-victory theme in Irenaeus' recapitulatio was certainly valid. The focus of Chapter Five centered on Anselm's satisfaction structure, demonstrating that Aulén's chief objection to Anselm's theory and to its later absorption into Lutheran Orthodoxy concerned not just its rationalistic structure but its fundamental religious

inadequacy.³³ Chapter Five enunciated Aulén's argument. At the end of this analysis, one gets the impression that Aulén's intense concern for the theocentricity of salvation, and his own theological disposition, rendered impossible any compromise with the satisfaction approach. Chapter Six examined Aulén's contribution to the Luther renewal in Sweden and his investigation of Luther. Our intention was to manifest that Aulén's interpretation of Luther corresponded to the deepest sentiments of Luther regarding the central issues of justification and faith. We demonstrated that a variety of authors competently analyzed Luther in different ways; at the same time, given all of the complexities of Luther interpretation, Aulén's position appears viable and defensible.

Throughout the dissertation, we made no attempt to pass over Aulén's sweeping assertions. We recognized that Aulén directly intended a bold assertion, a daring hypothesis for theological debate and progression. In that, he succeeded quite well. By his Christus Victor book and its subsequent development, Gustaf Aulén has contributed significantly to the Christian understanding of belief in Christ's death and triumph. What are some of the positive effects of Aulén's insight and endeavors?

In the first place, Aulén's book has made a special mark in soteriology. Whatever its failings, this brief book has decisively altered soteriological thinking and will continue to stimulate debate. Because of Aulén, no longer

can the images of the Patristic age just be dismissed as mythological and unworthy of serious consideration.³⁴ This, in itself, presents a solid theological achievement. Also, Aulén has forced a renewed and more exacting investigation of the redemption theology of Anselm, Luther and Lutheran Orthodoxy. Similarly, he has demonstrated in two major books that soteriology must cohere with the image of God. There exists a reciprocal, functional unity between how one thinks of redemption and how one portrays God. Aulén scrutinized these two areas in close detail. In this dissertation, we have probed Aulén's work in these areas by concentrating on his outlook and method.

Along these same lines, Aulén's theological presentation of a dramatic soteriology has stimulated a rediscovery of the power of religious symbols. William Loewe discusses the "religious depth" which "drew Aulén to the classic view of atonement and impelled him to essay a revision of the history of soteriology which would accord that view primacy."³⁵ Aulén speaks to "homo religiosus," and his work marks the "rediscovery of the originating, transformative power of symbolic discourse as the primary language of religious consciousness."³⁶ Such an interpretation is certainly not new; Aulén himself appreciated the power of symbolic forms in his 1965 book, The Drama and the Symbols. Affirming the efficacy and necessity of religious symbols for the whole, religious

person, one comes upon a valuable course of defense for Aulén's entire enterprise.

A major positive asset of Aulén's Christus Victor hypothesis concerns the absolute necessity for a victory theme in every valid atonement explanation. The Christus Victor proposition does not necessarily eliminate other soteriological emphases, but Aulén has conclusively demonstrated that no Christian soteriological approach can legitimately ignore this notion of Christ's struggle and victory over the forces of oppression.³⁷ Whatever other stresses or points of view regarding Christ's work may be presented, the aspect of the divine victory must never be excluded.

What Aulén has succeeded in doing is to identify and to analyze the one, absolute feature which must be present for a valid comprehension of Christ's saving work. Although Aulén tends to project this feature as dominant over all other approaches (this is certainly his thought), his Christus Victor view may be better served by asserting that it is dominant along with other possible soteriological features provided they do not violate Aulén's basic principle of the uncompromised theocentricity in atonement. Aulén has advanced a major theological contribution in identifying an aspect of atonement that reductively must always be present: divine triumph over the forces of evil. This admission possesses vital importance in spite of all

the specific discussions concerning expiation, propitiation, satisfaction, etc.

In conjunction with this basic principle, Aulén has shown that because of its clear coherence with absolute theocentricity and the primacy of the divine agape, the victory theme concurs integrally with various other major realities of Christian belief. If we recognize that salvation is by God's grace through the gift of faith, then the victory soteriology displays less difficulty than a structure of satisfaction and merits. Aulén also recognized the congruency of the idea of the dramatic atonement with the genuine purpose of Luther's reform. Hence, another positive quality of Aulén's theology is that the Christus Victor view fits coherently into a theology of salvation by grace.

One of the questions raised about the inadequacy of Aulén's approach concerns the victory over sin: How is sin conquered and in what sense can fallen human nature be restored? A critical issue raised by George Rupp is that Aulén's Christus Victor proposition fails to address properly the transformation of human nature; Aulén "never develops this characteristically Patristic problematic."³⁸ This criticism relates to the question of how Aulén's victory soteriology accounts for the conquest of sin. And more personally than just the conquest of sin, what of the questions of sin and guilt?

While Aulén does not directly delineate the response to this problem in the Olaus Petri lectures, his soteriological proposition, nonetheless, has the innate capacity to respond to this question. If Christ has achieved the conquest of sin, how can man experience it? The answer lies in the fact of forgiveness encountered in the fellowship of Christ with mankind. When one experiences a true forgiveness, which Aulén describes as taking upon oneself unconditionally the consequences of another's actions,³⁹ then one can realize how Christ overcame sin and all evil by entering the conflict and taking upon himself its burden. A personal Exodus signifying victory is accomplished. Furthermore, one encounters this liberation in the fullest sense through a concrete unity with Christ and other human beings. This demonstrates the particular meaning of the post-resurrection narratives of Luke 24:13-35, 44-48 and John 20:19-23 - forgiveness and fellowship as efficacious signs of Christ's victory. Although Aulén does not detail explicitly these possibilities, such a positive contribution lies right at the surface. In simple terms, it means going full circle back to where Aulén's Christology had its roots - Söderblom and Billing - since fellowship and forgiveness express the heart of their theology. To an eminent degree, Aulén's theology possesses the potential for signifying the conquest of sin through divine forgiveness and fellowship.

Another positive quality of Aulén's Christus Victor proposal is its "viability" for the lives of Christians. This can be clarified by using several criteria. First, Aulén has insisted that his dramatic atonement idea coheres properly with the God-image presented by Jesus. While not all the difficulties are solved, Aulén's proposal meets this scriptural criterion. Second, Aulén's soteriological treatment concurs with the fundamental truth of the uncompromised theocentricity of salvation. Aulén poses this point as a "litmus test" for the validity of an atonement explanation. Third, there exists a type of existential qualification. Does Aulén's dramatic atonement view address man and all his difficulties as he exists in the reality of today's world? Does this particular soteriology bring hope and confidence to the position of the human person by speaking to him in a voice far clearer than any schemes of satisfaction and expiation? In sum, does the dramatic view carry an advantage over the other atonement types for the ecclesial dimension both communal and individual? Does Aulén's dramatic atonement view correspond to the mystical-sacramental realities of Baptism and Eucharist in a manner superior to any cold rationalization? What effect does this atonement explanation have for the preaching of the Word and the spread of the Gospel? Does not the victory of Christ determine the evangelical nature of the Church in its very foundations? Aulén believes his "classic" atonement view responds well to each of these criteria.

Finally, Gustaf Aulén's *Christus Victor* theme embodies a rich theology of hope.⁴⁰ In a world threatened by conflict, struggle, and colossal forces of death, Aulén's *Olavs Petri* lectures seek to identify the ultimate power over these forces. It is not the power of coercion, not even the power of reason, it is the power of divine love.

In April, 1949, Aulén authored an article on the realism of the Christian conception of man. He wrote of the Christian person's acceptance of reality, one's unshirkable responsibility, and the need for an unconquerable confidence.⁴¹ Throughout his theology, Aulén expressed the deepest reason for the Christian's humility, responsibility, and confidence: we have been saved by the victory of Jesus Christ. *Christus Victor* reigns.

Finally, Gustaf Aulén's Christus Victor theme embodies a rich theology of hope.⁴⁰ In a world threatened by conflict, struggle, and colossal forces of death, Aulén's *Olaus Petri* lectures seek to identify the ultimate power over these forces. It is not the power of coercion, not even the power of reason, it is the power of divine love.

In April, 1949, Aulén authored an article on the realism of the Christian conception of man. He wrote of the Christian person's acceptance of reality, one's unshirkable responsibility, and the need for an unconquerable confidence.⁴¹ Throughout his theology, Aulén expressed the deepest reason for the Christian's humility, responsibility, and confidence: we have been saved by the victory of Jesus Christ. Christus Victor reigns.